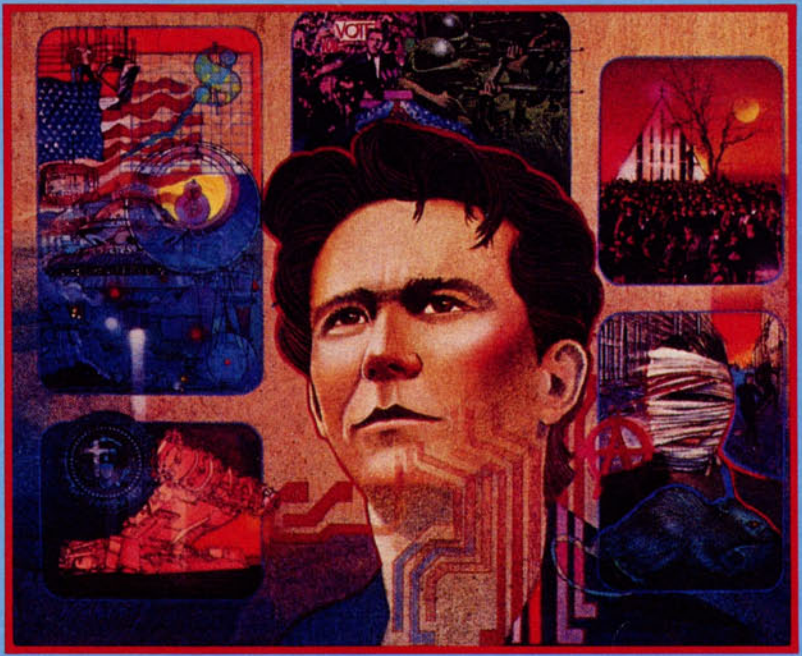
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FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

TAKING A PEEK

Activision
2350 Bayshore Frontage Rd.
Mountain View, CA 94043

GAMEMAKER DESIGNER'S LIBRARIES: The first two releases in this new product line that support Garry Kitchen's GameMaker cover SPORTS and SCIENCE FICTION. The libraries each contain pre-programmed features based on either sports or science fiction themes, including background scenes, objects, animation routines and sound effects. Available for C-64 ($19.95) and Apple ($24.95). Circle Reader #1.

LABYRINTH--THE COMPUTER GAME: Developed by Lucasfilm Games, Labyrinth: The Computer Game is based on the film directed by Jim Henson. You use a joystick to control your animated character, which can be either male or female. In your travels through the Labyrinth you will encounter many of the popular Jim Henson characters, including the Fireys, Ludo, Hoggle and Sir Didymus. C-64 ($34.95) and Apple IIe/c ($39.95). Circle Reader #2.

PAPER MODELS--THE CHRISTMAS KIT: This is the first in what is to be a series of paper modeling programs from Activision. Create your own three-dimensional Christmas ornaments and decorations. With the Christmas Kit you can create such holiday items as cubed and triangular gift boxes, toy trains, sleighs and complete Dickens-style Christmas villages. The items can be decorated with customized graphics using a built-in paint program or the ready-made clip-art library. Completed decorations are then printed ready to be assembled and displayed on a Christmas tree or given away as gifts. Mac, IBM, Apple ($29.95); C-64 ($24.95).Circle Reader #3.

Accolade
20833 Stevens Creek Blvd.
Cupertino, CA 95014

ACE OF ACES: An aerial warfare game in which you fly an R.A.F. 'Mosquito' fighter-bomber on four different air battles. These include an air to air battle with German fighters and bombers; an attempt to eliminate V1 rockets in mid-flight; a confrontation with U-boats; and a rate against enemy trains. Four graphically excellent views are available from within the cockpit: straight ahead, over the tail, and over each of the wings. C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader #4.

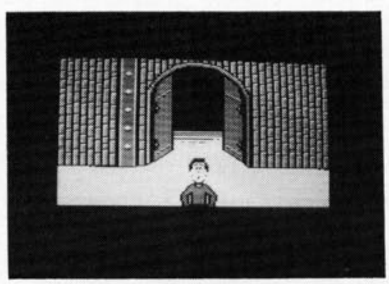
BitCards Inc.
P.O. Box 1289
Champlain, NY 12919

A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE: Here is something a bit different. 'A Christmas Adventure' is a text/graphic adventure set in and around Santa Claus' ice-castle at the North Pole. The program enables the purchaser to produce a personalized software gift-and-greeting-card all-in-one. By using the customizing utility you can include personal references to the recipient in the story. Apple II (64K) and C-64 ($24.95). Circle Reader #5.

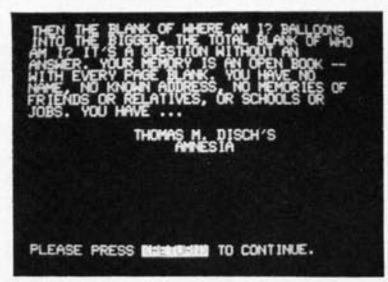
Broderbund
17 Paul Dr.
San Rafael, CA 94903

THE TOY SHOP: It looks like this is the Christmas of paper modeling soft-

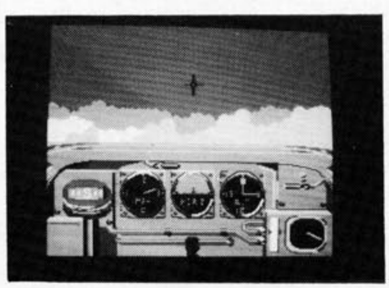
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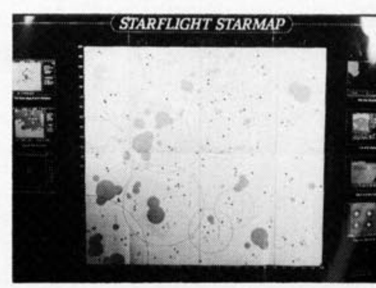
LABYRINTH



AMNESIA



ACE OF ACES



STARFLIGHT
(Hardcopy Map)



THE TOY SHOP



WORLD TOUR GOLF

ware. Prior to the release of 'Paper Models' mentioned above, Broderbund released their new mechanical model program. The Toy Shop contains all the necessary materials to construct such toys as a balloon-powered steam engine, balancing jet, carousel with horses that move up and down, equatorial sundial, pennypower scale, The Spirit of St. Louis and a clockwork mechanical bank. The Toy Shop comes with a starter supply of adhesive cardstock, wooden dowels, rubber stripping, wire, balloons and cotton cord. Replacement construction materials are available in 'The Toy Shop Refill Pack', sold separately. The Toy Shop runs on the Apple II and C-64/128 ($59.95); IBM and Mac ($64.95). Circle Reader #6.

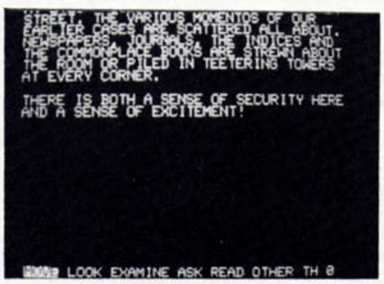
Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Dr.
San Mateo, CA 94404

AMNESIA: This is the first EA text adventure. In Amnesia, written by award-winning author Thomas Disch, the story begins with the main character waking in a strange hotel room in Manhattan. He cannot remember anything. You take it from there. The game includes a 1700-word vocabulary, 4000 separate locations in Manhattan including 650 streets and the entire subway system. Apple, IBM ($44.95); C-64 ($39.95). Circle Reader #7.

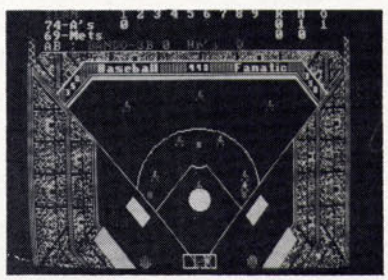
STARFLIGHT: According to EA President Trip Hawkins Starflight "is the most ambitious outer space fantasy game ever designed. It took 15 man-years of energy and all-out commitment to create a product of this calibre." The game is set in a galaxy of 270 star systems and 800 planets. The mission: find colonizable worlds, gather minerals and ancient artifacts, and learn the secrets of alien races. A built-in fractal generator makes Starflight graphically stunning. IBM ($49.95). Reader Service #8.

WORLD TOUR GOLF: What? Another golf game!? IBM gamers now have three new excellent golf programs from which to choose: Mean 18 from Accolade, Championship Golf from Gamestar, and, now, World Tour Golf. World Tour Golf is similar to the other two products but goes beyond. There are an incredible 24 historical courses available as well as a championship course made up of the world's toughest holes. A detailed construction set allows you to design your own courses (place tee, green, trees, bunkers, water hazards, hills, par and yardage markers, dragons and cows (?), etc.) Up to 50 objects can be placed on each hole.

Continued on pg. 52



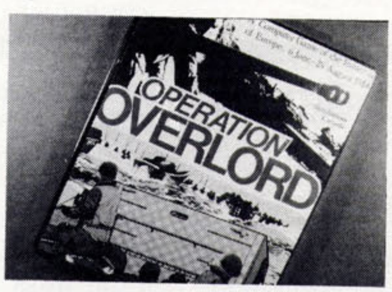
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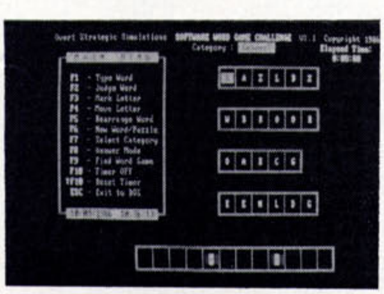
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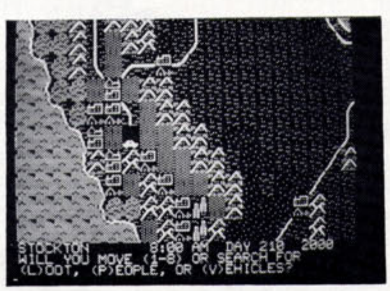
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ROADWAR 2000



ALAN MILLER

With this issue CGW begins a series of DESIGNER PROFILES. Contributing Editor Frank Boosman has been conducting a series of interviews with top name computer game designers. In this issue you will read his interview with Alan Miller of Accolade. In future issues you will be treated to interviews with Chris Crawford (Balance of Power), Doug Crockford (Lucas Films); Dan Gorlin (Broderbund); Jon Freeman & Ann Westfall (Archon/Adept); Dan Bunten (M.U.L.E. and Robot Rascals); Gary Grigsby (SSI); and Bruce Webster (Sundog and Star Rush). A second Designer Profile appears in this issue -- Scorpia's interview with Brian Moriarty (Trinity) of Infocom.

Alan Miller is one of the veterans of the computer gaming industry. He joined **Atari** in 1977, where he wrote such titles as *Surround*, *Hangman*, *Concentration*, and others for the Atari 2600 (also known as the VCS). In 1979, he left Atari with two other designers to form **Activision**, where he wrote more 2600 titles: *Checkers*, *Ice Hockey*, *Robot Tank* and others. In 1984 he left once again to form a new company, this time creating **Accolade** with Bob Whitehead. Since founding Accolade, Alan has written *Law of the West*, a unique action/adventure game with a Western setting. By the time you read this, Alan's new game, a football simulation for the Commodore 64, should be on the market.

I met Alan at Accolade headquarters in Cupertino, only a stone's throw away from industry giant Apple Computer. The Accolade offices were sleek and well-furnished, and bespoke of success. We began the interview by talking about some of his personal history in the gaming industry.

CGW: How did you get your start in the computer gaming field?

Alan: I joined Atari in 1977; I started out doing some initial games for the 2600 before it was introduced.

CGW: What was it like programming on the 2600?

Alan: The 2600 was a very strange machine to program for; the machine was highly configurable through software; all the parameters pertaining to display output were specifically under software control. It was nice because it left a lot of what the program could do up to the programmer, and the machine was not limited so much by what the hardware designers had originally designed the machine to do. So it was a vastly more configurable machine than anyone thought it would be.

CGW: So what happened then? You were at Atari?

Alan: I was at Atari doing 2600 work, and I had started doing a basketball game on their personal computer that was under development, and that project was delayed for a bit because they had trouble putting the operating system on the 400/800, as it was to be called. So four of us game designer types were called in to do the operating system, which we did in 12 weeks on the machine. So I co-authored the operating system for the 400/800, and completed the basketball game. Things were changing over at Atari, changing in ways that I did not like, and about that time (the end of 1979), I left to form Activision with a couple of other game designers.

CGW: I assume when you say "things happened" it got more corporate and more structured, or am I wrong?

Alan: I don't think those were the reasons that I left; that hadn't occurred to much of a degree when I left. But they had lost their striving for technical excellence in the design of products, and they had lost their understanding of the marketplace from a marketing standpoint, after Nolan had been removed from the company.

CGW: So you got to Activision and started doing VCS titles again?

Alan: That's right; I did more VCS titles. The VCS was a very popular machine to program on because there were so many units. It eventually got up to probably close to 15 million units worldwide. I did titles such as Checkers, Tennis, Ice Hockey...

CGW: My favorite!

Alan: That's my favorite, too, actually.

CGW: So you did those games; then what happened?

Alan: Then Bob Whitehead and I left Activision in November of 1984 and we got together and formed Accolade, which was incorporated in December of 1984.

CGW: Did you and Bob already have designs in mind when you left, or did you just say, "Let's form a company and do some games"?

Alan: We started the company first and then we thought of game ideas for quite a while before actually starting. So we didn't leave Activision with any game concepts in mind. That's something you can't do, or you're in trouble. But we started doing games here for personal computers, whereas at Activision we had not done any games--either Bob or myself--for computers.

CGW: And at Accolade you've done Law of the West?

Alan: Yes, and now I'm working on an untitled football game.

CGW: There are some interesting football games in the works at different companies.

Alan: Well, I hope so, because I'm not terribly impressed with the bunch that are out there now. I hope that in the next generation, we can provide customers with some real entertaining software, which is my job! I love to make games!

> "What we create for people are interactive experiences in which they'll enjoy participating. So we get those ideas from sports, movies, books, T.V. shows . . ."

CGW: Let's get away from history and talk about your philosophy of game design. Where do you get your ideas from?

Alan: We're inundated with ideas from everything; if you're talking about just going out and getting a subject for a game, what we create for people are interactive experiences in which they'll enjoy participating. So we get those ideas from sports, movies, books, TV shows... all aspects of life.

CGW: How does an idea come to you?

Alan: I usually have a whole bunch of ideas, and I don't know exactly where they come from. I have three other ideas on the back burner that I want to get to right now, but there's a weeding-out process that I go through once I get an idea: can I implement it? I'm also very practical-oriented: will people buy it, will they want it? These are the two main reasons for eliminating ideas.

CGW: Have you had an idea for a game come to you in a flash?

Alan: I rather doubt that it's happened that way. I think they tend to evolve more in the background of my mind. I've been doing this for about 10 years now, and there are a lot of subject areas where I've thought about doing games. There's usually not a flash of inspiration.

CGW: How much of a game do you have visualized before you start to work on it?

Alan: I work differently from a lot of people in that I try to visualize the entire game before I begin it, and that process usually goes something like this: usually I'm free after the end of a project, and I take a couple of months to sort through a bunch of ideas. After I decide which one I want to pursue, another couple-of-month-process begins where I think about the technical feasibility of it and the viewpoints that I want to have in the game--basically the screens. So at that point, for me, I will sit down and write a five- or ten-page description of what I want the game to be, just to straighten out in my mind aspects of the game.

CGW: One person said they thought game design consisted of three stages: the first third being the design and programming of the game; the second third being the debugging and the playtesting; and the final third putting the finishing touches on it--cleaning and polishing it. Do you agree with that?

Alan: I don't disagree, but I'd have to think about exactly how I lay it out. I'm about two-thirds through this football game, and the game is just at this point coming together to the point where people can start to play it. So the remaining third of the game is going to be playtesting, and that's going to be about ten weeks. That's playtesting, adding features, removing features that people find objectionable. So that's it, but I put a lot of thought up front before I actually sit down and write any code. I started thinking about this concept in December of last year, and I didn't write any code until the end of February. That's about a three-month period without actually doing any programming. I've been doing the programming now for about five months with one other co-designer.

CGW: On which machine?

Alan: We're working on the Commodore 64. So those first three months can sort of be counted on the project, because I was certainly doing background processing on the ideas, even though I was doing other tasks. So there's three months of thought, five months of implementation, and now we're to the point where we can begin tuning the game and actually start to play it. We're doing some

pretty ambitious things, so those five months of programming were pretty difficult.

CGW: Do you do games first on the Commodore 64 because one, you're familiar with it, two, games sell well on the 64, or three, because it's the lowest common denominator, and makes an easy port to other versions?

Alan: The reason we do it is because it will sell the most on that system. I don't think that because you do it on the Commodore, it's an easy port to other systems. I would say that this game could probably only be ported onto the Amiga. It makes use of special hardware processes inside the Commodore that are really closely emulated only on the Amiga, not on the Apple or the IBM. The Atari, even though it has player objects [sprites], it doesn't have enough to really do this game justice.

CGW: It's said that one of the ten rules of television production is that all hits are flukes. Do you agree with that?

Alan: I think that hits are unpredictable. I think one should always strive to turn out high-quality work; high-quality work has the greatest chance of producing a hit. I don't think a hit can be predicted or created; it just occurs. So I generally agree with that.

CGW: Which game of yours are you proudest of?

Alan: I think the Ice Hockey game. It has a degree of involvement that somehow is better than a lot of the other things I've done. It expresses more to people the idea of fighting for the puck and skating on the ice and just seems to draw people more into the game than any other stuff I've done.

CGW: Chris Crawford once said that when he works on a game, he works on it, playtests it, and then fine-tunes it until he's sick of it, until he can't stand to look at it. When he can't stand the thought of it anymore, then he knows it's done. But a month later, he wishes he could get the game back and change just one or two things. Are you that way?

Alan: Well, I guess I force myself to work on it that extra couple of months, because I am physically ill during the last couple of months of working on my games. I have nightmares.

CGW: Really? So if you do a game a year, then that's one or two months out of every year that you've got nightmares.

Alan: Yeah.

CGW: And people said game design was easy!

Alan: Game design is not easy! But it's very rewarding in a lot of ways; it allows me to have my work interact with humans in a way that no other programming can.

> "Seeing people enjoy my games is my primary reward."

CGW: Someone once made a comment that they thought that people like computers because computers let them play God. They let you have total control of a little universe. Do you think that's true?

Alan: As a game designer, that's true, and that's one of the things I like about designing games for computers. But what I primarily like about computers is seeing people react to my work. I very much understand what you're talking about, about playing God, because you're creating a universe. But there's another level of creating an emotional reaction in people that's more satisfying to me.

CGW: Does it give you a thrill to watch somebody playing your game?

Alan: Yes, as long as they're enjoying it! I really feel bad when they're not enjoying it. Seeing people enjoy my games is my primary reward. Finan-

cially, I could probably make as much money doing straight programming, and probably work less, but as I said, there are other rewards to the job. I have a lot more independence and there are emotional rewards that I could never get with traditional engineering projects, because on a traditional, large engineering project, it will last for two to five years, and you're only one of 10 or 15 people working on the project. It's really hard to isolate it and see what you did. I guess I need to see that people recognize my work. I get some good feelings just out of the recognition.

CGW: Which computer games do you really like?
Alan: Which games do I really like?

CGW: Yeah. If you could go to a desert island...
Alan: [laughs]

CGW: ... with just a computer, electricity, and five games, which ones would you take?

Alan: Well, I'd prefer to say which games I like. We have to consider the arcade arena, too. I like Karateka a lot. I like Marble Madness a lot in the arcades--I hear EA has a real hot version coming out on the Amiga, but I haven't seen it. What other games do I like? Hmmm... I need a list of games!

CGW: What games have you played a lot of in the past?

Alan: I probably put hundreds of dollars into Missile Command as an arcade game. I play a lot of pinball, but I'm not really addicted to any one pinball machine. They all seem sort of generic to me, unfortunately. Choplifter in the arcades is real good. It's a good home game, but the arcade version has super graphics. Ancient Art of War by Broderbund holds long-term interest for me. I also played a lot of the original Adventure game, the one that Zork was based on.

CGW: Have you ever seen a game and said to yourself, "I'm glad my name isn't on that"?

Alan: I unfortunately see that all too often. I see the problems in games--in fact, that's my specialty, reviewing games for people here and at all the other companies I've been in. I'm very happy to see games that are implemented extraordinarily well. Unfortunately, I see that very rarely. Most of the games I see could be implemented much better. It's mostly just a matter of time, and of experience on the designer's part, to get the games done right.

CGW: Do you see this poor quality in published games, or in submissions you get at Accolade?

Alan: Submissions aren't so bad, because they're usually submitted as an incomplete work. But I do see a lot in published works, and that disappoints me. I'm talking about implementation here. The graphics are usually pretty good, but the human interface can be bad--games can be awkward to play. One of our competitors has a golf game where you have to hit the keyboard about 20 times before you can take a single shot. That's ludicrous to me, because no human being has that the patience to do that, or maybe one out of 10,000. Games should be worn by the user without feeling like they're wearing them. They should be intuitively obvious to use, and as transparent as possible to the user. The user should feel that they're in an experience. That's something about some of my earlier sports games: you weren't aware that you were tweaking a joystick and pushing a button so much; they sort of pulled you into the screen. I miss that in a lot of the games today.

CGW: Are there any designers whose body of work you really like?

Alan: Sure. Bill Budge did a lot of things early on that I thought were great. Some people that I worked with at Activision, Dave Crane and Steve Cartwright, are first-rate designers. Over at Epyx,

> "I think in the next 10 or 20 years interactive entertainment will become the dominant form of entertainment in this country. . . it will surpass television."

Steve Landrum, who currently has a motorcycle racing game out. He has also done Commie Mutants from Outer Space. Then there's Dan Gorlin; I only know his work from Choplifter, actually. As I said, Rex Bradford, the author of Mean 18. I really like his work. Eugene Jarvis, the designer the designer of Defender and Robotron 2084.

CGW: If you couldn't design computer games, what would you do?

Alan: Well, my training was as an electrical engineer, and I have a lot of experience in that, so most logically it would seem that I would go back to traditional engineering. Unfortunately, I don't find that terribly rewarding, and after my experience in this business, which is a creative business, I think next I would try writing books or television and movie scripts.

CGW: How do you see computer games evolving in the next 5 or 10 years?

Alan: From a hardware standpoint, the visual resolution is going to continue to improve as well as the audio reproduction capabilities of the machine. On the software end, I think we're going to see evolution towards better development of the characters inside the games. I think we will continue to broaden the scope of the themes we explore. I think visually we'll see the work develop more cinemagraphic techniques where you can see cuts and dissolves and fades and shots from different perspectives, which currently are very difficult to generate on the systems. But they will appear much more like movies and television.

CGW: What about 10, 20 or 50 years from now?

Alan: I think in the next 10 or 20 years we'll an expansion of interactive entertainment similar to that which television has undergone since its inception. I think it will become the dominant form of entertainment in this country. I think it will surpass television and make it passe in the next 20 or 30 years. Interaction is so much more interesting than passivity, having a control over your own destiny.

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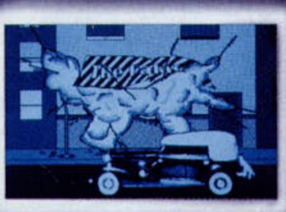


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by Roy Wagner

It's A Small World

For a long time it has been a very large world. The only software that we seem to see available was written in the good old US of A. And still there was a lot of talk about the "good stuff" that was available over-there and it never seem to come over-here. Granted, a lot of the good stuff over-there were clones of the good-stuff over-here, or stuff that really was not that good. But still we never got a chance to see it.

One of the major reasons was tied to legal licensing rights and royalities and all that mumbo-jumbo. Bottom line was that WE were missing out on a lot of good, low priced software games.

This started to change in 1985 with the introduction of MasterTronic software from Great Britain with prices of about $10 per game. The graphics and sound were good and the games pretty much matched the price. Good short term disposable fun. This year we saw the introduction of more United Kingdom titles from Firebird Licensees. And generally speaking these were of higher quality with a higher price. The pricing however was much lower than a similar games from a USA producer.

Well, now as we are about to enter 1987, we have word that two major US game producers, Activision and Broderbund, are bringing in some of the best titles from all around the world for OUR consumption.

Activision will be releasing their "foreign" games under the name of ELECTRIC DREAMS. So finally, we will be seeing many more of these great, top-sellers from all over the rest of the world. Some of the titles that we can expect to see in the near future are: THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, ZOIDS, and SPINDIZZY.

Meanwhile Broderbund, another major US producer of games, is negotiating to distribute its software titles all over the world. It's LODE RUNNER game is an extremely big hit in Japan already. The key products that they are releasing abroad are: THE PRINT SHOP (a tremendously BIG seller here already), FANTAVISION, DAZZLE DRAW, THE TOY SHOP, and THE ANCIENT ART of WAR. They have brought into this country such imports as: SNOGGLE, APPLE PANIC and ALIEN RAIN.

Name Your Pleasure

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD from Firebird comes to this country from the the UK. This topped the British best seller list and is out to do the same here. It was voted the Best Adventure Game of 1985 by the "Commodore Computing International" magazine.

This title is based on the name of a popular British rock group. The game begins with you as Frankie, a person devoid of any personality, in an in an environment of suburban boredom. You are out on the streets of Mundanville with all house looking the same from the outside, but each holding different "adventures" inside (much like here in the states).

There are well over sixty tasks that can be completed in a journey to seek the completion of your personality, and to reach the Pleasure Dome which holds the "ultimate experience". Your travels will involve you in a murder mystery, a labyrinth of options, a bombing raid on Merseyside, Cupid's arrows, talking heads (British), a shooting gallery and a war room. Many other surprises await you. There is a distinct British flavor to much of what you encounter, but much of it is easily understood by anyone fluent in the language of the arcade game, with an accent on the modern as versus the classic fantasy adventure so popular here.

A joystick is recommend, but the keyboard can be used. The manual explains enough to get you started, but not nearly enough to understand what is going on. I'm sure you'll figure it out. I greatly missed the game NOT having a SAVE GAME option. The graphics and game play are well done. I think you will find it an interesting game.



It's Up In The Air

Both FLIGHT SIMULATOR II and JET from subLOGIC are one of the best simulations of reality that are available for the home computer. However, not everyone wants to experience the complexities or joy of flying, even if scenery disks are available to all major population areas in the United States and Japan. Some of us enjoy sitting in our favorite chair at home looking out at the screen showing us the latest top football game. From there we send each ball on its flight to score another one for our favorite team. If only we were managing the game, our team would win every time.

Well, from the producers of great flying simulators come a new sport simulation. FOOTBALL gives us a comprehensive coaches play book that provides a full complement of offensive and defensive plays. We are limited to two all star teams with very detailed, though fictitious, individual player details.

The player characteristics can be altered before starting a game, but unfortunately cannot be saved for use at another time. The length of the quarter can be set



from 1 to 99 minutes. You may play against the computer or another person. When two are playing both make there play selections at the same time each using a joystick. Once a play has begun both the offensive or defensive player may use the joystick to control the actions of key players, or just let the computer play out both sides. For a pass play, you must initiate the pass using the joystick.

This game is quite distinctive from other football games on the C64 because the action of each individual player is represented and animated. The game is somewhat limited in options and player data. The attempt to depict all the players was a good idea, but I don't think that it really looks that good. It is hard to identify the different players and when there is movement down field, it looks more like the players are ice skating than running down field. I was disappointed in seeing this game turn out to be not as good a simulation as I expected. Perhaps it was because after such great flying simulations, I expected too much when my feet were back on the ground.

Recommendations

With the gift giving season nearly here, I offer the following to be worthwhile presents:

Action Arcade:
LODERUNNER'S RESCUE (Broderbund)
Best Implementation:
Any LUCASFILM Game from EPYX
Interactive Fiction:
Any Electronic Novel (Broderbund)
Sports Simulation:
LEADERBOARD Golf (Access)
Children's game:
Any DISNEY/SIERRA Educational Game
Home Utility: NEWSROOM (Springboard)

Circle Reader Service #30

(No I.D. required for half-elves.)

When the Going Gets Tough, the Bard Goes Drinking.



And the going is tough in Skara Brae town. The evil wizard Mangar has cast an eternal winter spell. Monsters control the streets and dungeons beneath. Good citizens fear for their lives. What's worse, there's only one tavern left that serves wine.

But the Bard knows no fear. With his trusty harp and a few rowdy minstrel songs he claims are magic, the Bard is ready to boogie. All he needs is a band of loyal followers: a light-fingered rogue to find secret doors, a couple of fighters to bash heads, a conjurer to create weird allies, a magician for magic armor.

Then it's off to combat, as soon as the Bard finishes one more verse. Now what's a word that rhymes with "dead ogre?"



4 classes of magic user, including wizard and sorceror. 85 new magic spells in all.



128 color monsters, many animated. All challenging.



Full-color scrolling dungeons. 16 levels, each better than the one before. 3-D city, too.

Optional use of characters created in Wizardry® or Ultima III.®

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To order: Visit your retailer or call (800) 245-4525 (In Calif. call (800) 562-1112) for VISA or MasterCard orders. To purchase by mail, send check or money order to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 7530, San Mateo, CA 94403. Add $5 for insured shipping and handling. Allow 1-4 weeks for delivery. The Bard's Tale is worth the wait.

 For a copy of our complete catalogue and direct order form, send $.50 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404.

ROMMEL
BATTLES FOR TOBRUK

1941: Rommel's Afrika Korps was besieging the strategic port of Tobruk. The British 8th Army attacked three times to raise the siege: Operations Brevity, Battleaxe, and Crusader. On the third try, Rommel retreated. But the next spring he was back, sweeping around the flank of 8th Army's Gazala Line and into Tobruk, forcing the British all the way back to El Alamein.

Rommel gives you four different games: all the battles for Tobruk. Now you can experience the sweeping maneuver and hard-fought tank battles of the desert war with the incredible historical detail that only GDW can provide: battalion-level historical units, counting individual tanks (by type, from L3s to Matildas), men, artillery, and anti-tank guns; a game system that fully models combined-arms combat; detailed supply and air war systems. We put history in so you get history out. And it's remarkably easy to play.





- ★Simultaneous hidden movement—limited intelligence
- ★Real combined arms interactions
- ★Detailed model of unit morale
- ★Tactical and strategic maps
- ★Computer plays either side at three skill levels
- ★Save game and play by mail options
- ★Change options in mid-game—even change sides
- ★Keyboard or joystick control
- ★Minefields and fortifications
- ★Fatigue and regrouping
- ★Complete documentation
- ★Extensive historical notes

The Battle of Chickamauga

One of the bloodiest and most evenly matched battles of the Civil War. You command a Union or Confederate army of 50,000 men: brigades of infantry or cavalry with attached artillery. The computer keeps track of each man and gun, plus changing unit morale, fatigue, and communications status.

Rommel: $40; Chickamauga: $35. Disk for Atari computers with 48k. Both coming soon for Apple and Commodore computers. If there is no store in your area, you can order direct from GDW. Add $1 per game for handling.

History In—History Out

GDW Game Designers' Workshop

P.O.Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

(309)452-3632

A GDW Computer War Game

by Frank Boosman

Pushing The Envelope

In test pilot terminology, "pushing the envelope" means making a plane go faster or higher than ever before, or performing maneuvers more complex than any before them. To push the envelope is to be the best, if only until the next hotshot comes along and outdoes you.

Computer games can push the envelope: a particular game might have better sound than any before it, or more realistic graphics, or a radical new design. It's fun to see a game that pushes the envelope; you feel as if you're watching a little tiny bit of history in the making.

It's my pleasure this month to review two games that push the envelope of computer game design, but in very different ways.

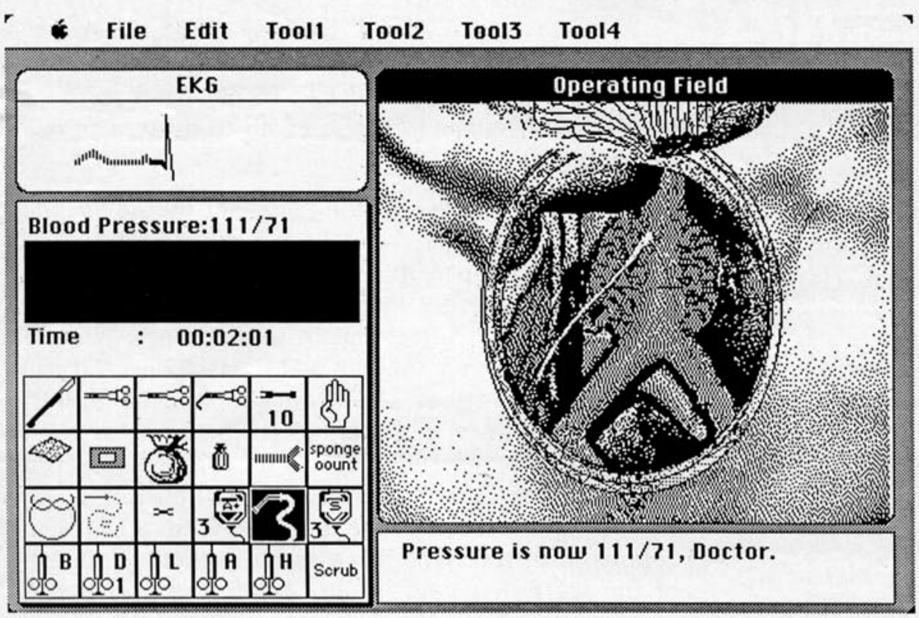
Surgery In Only Ten Easy Lessons?

Well, not quite. But Surgeon, a new game from Interactive Simulations for Medicine (ISM), is easily the most realistic depiction of surgery ever available for a microcomputer. I found myself amazed at the detail of design that went into this game as I played it. Before I wax any further, though, let me briefly describe it.

Surgeon begins by showing a digitized x-ray or sonogram of a patient complaining of pain in the abdomen. You must first determine whether or not the patient requires surgery; unnecessary surgery is a serious matter. If surgery is required, the display will change to one of the patient's abdomen as it would appear before you. To the left is an array of surgeon's tools: scalpels, forceps, sutures, hypodermic needles full of drugs, and more. Above the palette of tools is a graphic electrocardiogram (EKG) indicator. (This will be familiar to anyone who watched the television show Emergency; remember "Set up to transmit an EKG and start a Ringer's Lactate"?)

Surgeon simulates one and only one abnormal condition: an aortal aneurysm. This is a blood clot in the aorta, and can be fatal if not treated promptly. The idea is to cut through the layers of tissue until the aorta is exposed, then remove the aneurysm and a section of the aorta along with it. An artificial graft must replace the removed section of the aorta, and the patient must be closed up. If you can do this without letting your patient die, then the operation is a success. If not, well... don't blame me when your malpractice insurance rates go up.

Like most great games, Surgeon challenges our perception of what a game should be. Is this a hand-eye coordination game? Yes, to a degree, since that's how real surgery is. Is this a medical knowledge game? Yes, since you'll have to learn what certain tools and medicines are used for, and how to recognize abnormal heartbeats. Is this a tool for learning about surgery? Yes; as a friend of mine has pointed out, Surgeon would excel in applications such as giving medical students their first taste of surgery, or perhaps showing a patient and his or her family exactly what would be done during an operation. The list goes on.



Ultra Realism

The folks at ISM have gone to great lengths to make Surgeon medically accurate; surgery works just like the real thing. The patient is prepped as in real life, blood vessels bleed the way they're supposed to, the layers of tissue appear the way a surgeon would see them... In short, this is a very technically accurate game. About the only thing I can think of that the people at ISM left out was anesthesia; in Surgeon, it's considered to be automatic. I can think of two good reasons for this, though: first, anesthesia is a separate specialty from surgery, and second, it would be asking a lot of a player to keep track of both the EKG and the anesthesia, and operate on the patient at the same time. Not even real doctors do that.

Surgeon has its faults, of course, but they're relatively minor. The manual needs improvement; hiring a professional technical writer would be a good step. Also, I felt as if Surgeon needed an "autopsy" feature that would give clues as to where the player went wrong when a patient dies. And I think I've elaborated on my dislike of copy protection before. But even without these changes, Surgeon is still a very solid, complete, and playable game.

Arcade Gaming And The Machintosh

A friend of mine who has developed some productivity software for the Macintosh was recently contemplating the idea of doing an arcade game for the Mac. Why? Because he felt that there hadn't been an arcade game yet for the Macintosh with really good animation. I know a few people who would disagree with him, but it's certainly true that the quality of animation has been lacking in many games I've seen. But he changed his tune when I showed him Dark Castle, the latest game from Silicon Beach, makers of Airborne and Enchanted Scepters.

Dark Castle is, in a nutshell, the best arcade game I've seen for the Macintosh, and perhaps the best I've seen on any microcomputer ever. Why? Well, for starters, I'll talk about the artwork. Done by Mark Pierce (of VideoWorks fame), it's simply astounding. Every facet of the 14-room dungeon is beautifully crafted, all the way from the dragon to the pits of lava to the one-eyed mutants who love to dance. Mark has surpassed himself with his work on Dark Castle.

Hand-in-hand with the artwork is the animation, which is flawlessly smooth and natural in appearance. As your on-screen character runs, jumps, and does battle with medieval creatures, you'll find yourself commenting on how realistic he and the rest of the inhabitants of the castle look. Particularly impressive is the shimmering water effect on the title screen. To be honest, I didn't realize the Macintosh

Continued on pg. 42

BRIAN MORIARTY

In mid-July, our Adventure Game Editor, Scorpia had the opportunity to interview Brian Moriarty, author of "Wishbringer" and "Trinity". Here is her report.

Brian and I met for lunch and had a really fascinating conversation. Mostly the talk was about "Trinity", but we also talked a little about "Wishbringer" and some of Infocom's plans for the future.

CGW: Let's start with a little background. How did you come to be a game designer with Infocom?

Brian: Originally, I worked as technical writer for Analog Computing. Then in the spring of '84, I went to Infocom as a microcomputer engineer, to work on the interpreters for various micros. I got to be friends with Mike Berlyn, Dave Lebling, Stu Galley and all those people, and I convinced them that I was going to hold my breath until they made me a designer. I also had two adventure games that had been published in Analog, and they were pretty well received, so that helped, too.

CGW: Ok, now for the usual question: where did you get the idea for "Wishbringer"?

Brian: Actually, the first game I did was "Trinity". When I became a games designer, Infocom asked me for a synopsis of a game I wanted to do, so I wrote the synopsis for "Trinity". They looked at it and they all liked it, but they said it was too ambitious. Of course, at the time we didn't have the Plus system yet, and it would have been very difficult to do that on a normal system. Then the marketing people came over and said "Hey, what we really want is an introductory game". So I said "Ok, I'll do an introductory game. Let's try to think of something neat to put in the box".

CGW: So "Wishbringer" was actually developed from the packaging?

Brian: Right. I said: "We'll put a magic ring in the box, and we'll do a story about a magic ring". But then I said, "Magic rings have already been done, and the ring would probably be a plastic one. Why don't we put rocks in the box? We could get a carload of rocks, they'd be cheap, and we'd just put one in every box." Then a marketing person asked, "Why don't we make the rocks glow in the dark, since the rock in the game glows?". I said "Ok, we'll paint the rocks with glow-in-the-dark paint". But the marketing person said "No, the kids will come along and suck the paint off". So someone suggested we make rocks. Meanwhile, I started to write a game around a glow-in-the-dark rock. And that's where "Wishbringer" came from; it came from the plastic rock.

CGW: Did you enjoy doing "Wishbringer"?

Brian: Oh yes, very much. It was nice, and it sold really well. It was '85's biggest seller for Infocom, by far.

CGW: Will Infocom do a follow-up to "Wishbringer"?

Brian: Yes. Not right away, but it's on the list.



CGW: Ok, let's move on to "Trinity". Where did that idea come from?

Brian: Actually, I had the idea in '83, when I was working at Analog and writing adventures there. It's an idea that I'd had in my head for a long time. When the chance came to do it, I took the plunge.

CGW: Was there anything that set of the specific train of thought that brought you to "Trinity" and what would happen in the game?

Brian: I've read a lot about that in the past, and I've always been interested in that subject. When I started working on the game, I amassed a pretty substantial library on the history atomic bomb and nuclear weaponry in general. In the course of writing the game, I also did some original research. I went to the Trinity site myself, visited Los Alamos and a lot of museums, and I talked to a couple of people who were actually there. So a lot of the stuff that happens in "Trinity" is pretty accurate. I think it's the first interactive fiction that attempts to re-create a real place and not just simulate a made-up place.

CGW: And that's all in the New Mexico section of the game?

Brian: The Kensington Gardens are relatively accurate, too, except for the location called "The Wabe". Every other location there is correct and in the right place. I hadn't seen it before I wrote about it, but I have seen it since. That part was written based on maps and photographs.

CGW: How long did it take you to do "Trinity"?

Brian: It was started in May of last year ('85) and finished in June of this year. A little over a year.

CGW: How much of that time went into the design, and how much went into the programming of it?

Brian: As usual, most of it was programming. That's usually the case. I'd say that 90% of the time is programming, and the other 10% is creative. Our development system is still very programming intensive. It doesn't do a lot for you. It does some things, but there's still a lot you have to do for yourself. It's quite a bit of drudgery.

CGW: What was the most difficult part of the game to write?

Brian: The hardest part was in the fantasy world: the giant sundial, and the shadow moving across. There's all sorts of factors involved there in moving that shadow and having it in different rooms, and the doors opening and closing, and then having you be able to control it. That was very tricky do.

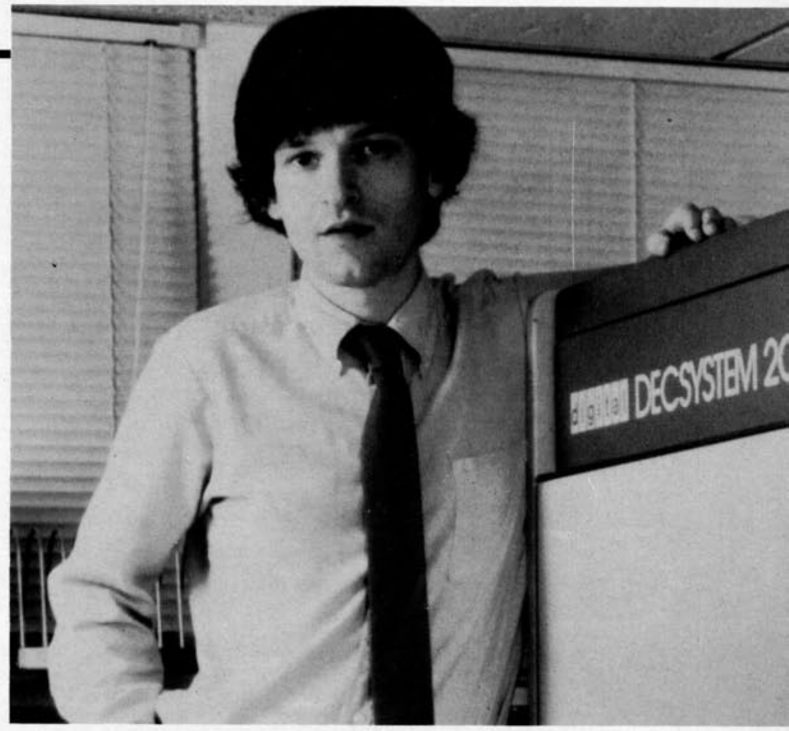
CGW: Did you map everything out before you started the coding?

Brian: I usually do, although not all the designers do. When you're making it all up, it's easier to do that. The first thing I did was sit down and make a map of Trinity site. It was changed about 50 times trying to simplify it and get it down from over 100 rooms to the 40 or so rooms that now comprise it. It was a lot more accurate and very detailed, but a lot of that detail was totally useless. So I tried to boil it down to what was absolutely needed. That map that comes in the package is made from geologic surveys and blueprints and is completely accurate.

CGW: Why did you want to write a game as depressing as "Trinity"?

Brian: Well, it wasn't a pleasant experience, I can tell you that. It's not easy to sit down and write that stuff. As I said, I've talked to some people who were there, and I've read a lot of books by people who were there, and the one thing they all say about it, the one common theme, is that it was inevitable. That if we hadn't done it, someone else might have. And they also say that that's not the only thing that's inevitable. History has a lot to teach us. And that's the point of the game. Because when you're the Wabewalker, and going through the game, you're very literally creating the Book of Hours, you're writing your own history.

CGW: So what statements are you making with "Trinity"? Do you have a personal statement to make?



Brian: I wanted people, when playing the game, to feel their helplessness. Because that's what I felt when I was reading and talking to these people and seeing these places. You could just feel the weight of history on you. Going to Trinity site and being there and realizing what this place means. I just wanted people to feel that weight on them when playing the game. Have it crush them in the end, because that's what I got out of my studies and research.

CGW: There are a couple of spots in the game where you have to do some unpleasant things. Why did you put that in?

Brian: That was deliberate. I was amazed to see how many people were really bothered by the scene with the lizard, because it was them doing it. It's nice to know interactive fiction could do that, make you uncomfortable about killing things. In no other media could I make you feel bad about killing something. Because there's only one medium where I can make YOU do it, and make you feel empathy for a thing that doesn't exist. It's only with interactive fiction that you can explore those emotions.

CGW: When the game was finished, how did you feel about it?

Brian: Relieved. As usual. We usually feel that way when a game is finished, but I felt especially relieved. It was hard to live with that game for a year. But I don't want people to be scared away from this game. A lot of people look at the cover and say "Oh God, a gloomy game". It isn't a gloomy game, but it does have a dark undertone to it. It's not like it's the end of the world. But I'm glad I did "Trinity". It's nice to know that interactive fic-

tion can do things besides give you puzzles and make you laugh. It can also make you think. And it can deal with big issues.

CGW: Moving on to perhaps a lighter subject, can you tell us what you're working on now?

Brian: I can't say very much, it's too early yet, but my next game will be something light. I don't need to do another one like "Trinity", that was a hard game to work on. It's a collaboration, with someone from outside Infocom. The new one will be a fantasy, and should be out in February.

CGW: (Excitement!) Is this the follow-up to Hitchhiker (hope hope)?

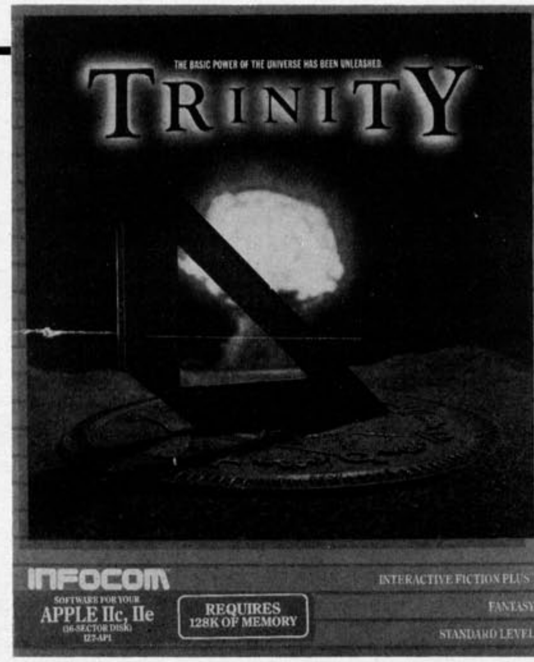
Brian: No.

CGW: Awwwwwww. Will Infocom be doing one eventually?

Brian: We hope to. Douglas Adams would like to, but he's very busy right now.

CGW: How long have you been working on your current project?

Brian: I just started it less than a month ago. It's a quickie, it has to be done very quickly. It's something that had already been developed, but was put on the back burner for awhile.



CGW: So this will be a beginner or standard level game?

We're trying to get away from genres and levels, I think we're going to try to make the games two levels, Introductory and Other. It's very difficult to assign a level to a game. Who can say what is standard or what is advanced? Hitchhiker's was labelled "Standard", but a lot of people thought it was "Expert" level. We haven't abandoned levels yet, but I think we're going to.

CGW: And the same for genres?

Brian: We have thrown out the genres. How do you classify "Trinity"? is it a fantasy? Is it science-fiction? We had trouble classifying that. The game I'm working on now is completely unclassifiable. And a couple of other games we have in the works just don't fit in. We didn't like calling "Ballyhoo" a mystery because it's not like our other mysteries. People saw "mystery" on the box and thought "Oh, it's another of those games where you have to talk to characters". But it's not, it's a puzzle-oriented game. So we're getting away from trying to pin it down. We're just saying, "this is the game, read the description on the back to get an idea of what it's about".

CGW: Brian, it's been a pleasure talking with you. Before you go, do you have any closing remarks?

Brian: No, except to say what I've been saying to everyone about "Trinity". That it's not a funeral, and not to be afraid of it. It's kind of a dark game, but it's also, I like to think, kind of a fun game, too. I don't want people to be put off by the subject. But I do want people to think about what they see. And to write lots of letters if they're mad at the ending and think it should be something else. I love to hear from people. I hope I do.

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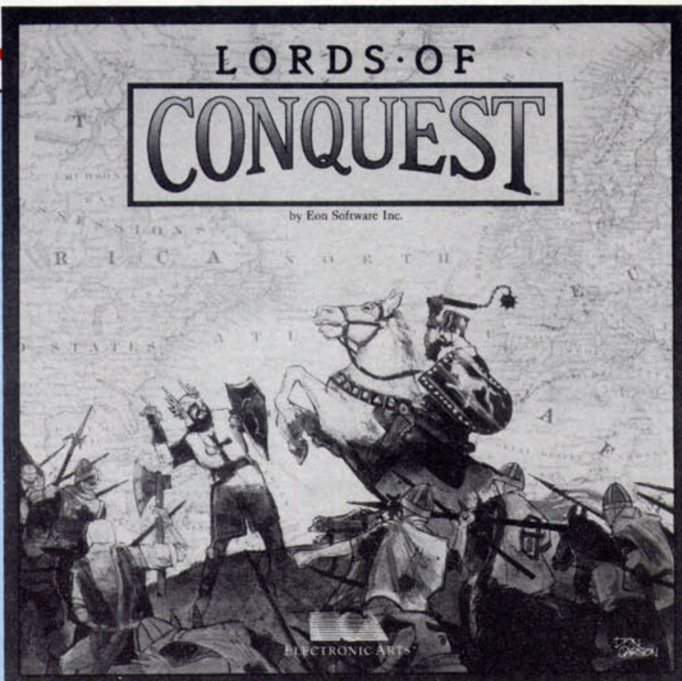
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LORDS OF CONQUEST

by Aurelio Locsin III

Name:	Lords of Conquest
Type:	Introductory Wargame
System:	C-64 (Apple & Atari coming)
#Players:	1-4
Author:	Ted Schmeckpepper
Publisher:	Electronic Arts 1920 Gateway Dr. San Mateo, CA 94404

Have you ever wanted to conquer the world? No? Well, how about Europe or South America? Perhaps you have fantasized about extending the borders of Imperial Rome, or winning the Civil War for the South.

If wily enough, and if blessed with luck, you can attain any of these goals with *Lords of Conquest* (from Electronic Arts), a new computer game based on the boardgame *Borderlands* (from Eon Products).

On maps depicting real and imaginary continents, you raise armies and conquer territories to control resources.

Since you enter moves are entered via joystick and are menu controlled, the simplest way of learning is simply by playing.

Twenty different one-screen maps cover parts of the real and imagined world.

The list of built-in maps of *Lords of Conquest* include:

North America 1 & 2
Shenandoah 1 & 2
Caribbean
World
3 Continents (Europe, Asia, Africa)
Africa
South America
Polar Ice
Down Under
European Wars
Prussia
Early Italia
Mediterranean
Middle East
China
Sea of Japan
Riverland
Borderlands

If the built-in maps do not appeal to you, you can create and save a map or have the program create one at random.

Play is conducted in yearly phases: 1) Production for building units and collecting resources; 2) Trade, available only in multi-player games; 3) Shipment for moving forces; and 4) Combat for taking territories by force.

Some Thoughts on the Variety of Strategic Considerations in LORDS OF CONQUEST

by Jack Kittredge

Lords of Conquest is, as many grizzled gamers know, based on the board game *Borderlands*, published by Eon Products. When thinking about the conversion we tried to make the most of the new medium. Besides taking care of all the picky details like managing pieces, counting forces, and limiting moves, we knew that computers excel in at least two other areas: data processing and working with variable parameters. The quality of the solo game attests to the work which went into programming LORDS to process large amounts of data and reach far down the decision tree for optimum "intelligent" computer play. The large number of optional parameters is our stab at keeping the game fresh and strategically challenging.

THE OPTIONS

There are a number of ways to play *Lords of Conquest*, each of which gives you an entirely different experience.

During the Production phase you can build the basic combat unit, the weapon, which moves one territory at a time. You also collect resources, among which the horse is the most useful. Horses attack, defend and carry weapons up to two territories away. Horses and weapons can be ferried across water by boats, which can also attack and defend. The most expensive units to build are cities which increase production and are useful on defense.

The artificial intelligence routines play a pretty good game. The computer player will attack territories unexpectedly and sometimes holds back on unit building until it can build more powerful units. However the computer does not use its boats efficiently, preferring to attack with land units.

When you close in on a victory against a computer opponent it has an annoying habit of conceding the game with a cute message like "Uh oh, I have to run." However, the computer does not offer you the same concession when you want to surrender. Instead, it crushes you totally. The winner of the game sees the map colored in his image while listening to a short musical tribute.

Solitaire games last about 30 minutes. Multiplayer games can last much longer. Games can be saved in progress.

The manual does a thorough job of explaining the rules. However it would have been nice to have the quick reference guide (printed on the back cover) as a separate card. This would have saved much page flipping.

Veteran wargamers may find *Lords of Conquest* too simple. However, the game offers a quick and pleasant break from complex simulations. Its simplicity also allows new players to concentrate less on mechanics and more on strategy. General gamers will find *Lords of Conquest* to be an enjoyable introduction to strategy/diplomacy games.

Number of Players. The maximum game, with four players, is wide-open and free-wheeling. Alliances shift constantly and you have to be a master of diplomacy to gain and hold a real winning position. With three players, each player lives in fear of an alliance of the other two against him. The canny player will strive to monopolize some vital resource and use trade to reward his friends and punish his enemies. The 2-player game ignores trade and diplomacy in favor of straight strategy. Ruthless pressure and careful attention to details and timing are the order of the day. One unexpected move may bring about a complete reversal of fortunes. Playing solitaire against the relentlessly logical computer is how most people play LORDS. We spent a good deal of effort getting a vigorous opponent into the cpu, and I think most humans will lose their first few games. But AI is still a pretty fledgling subject, and the brain has had a good head start (so to speak). Humans have the ability to learn and to recognize important patterns of development, which the computer does not. After a while you will find yourself getting better and better. That's why we threw in the nine stages of difficulty - when you're winning more than you're losing, rachet up to the next stage and eat dust again for a while!

Game Level. LORDS has four strategy levels. The introductory game, with only gold and horses, is in some ways the most elegant. The lack of variety of resources focuses play directly upon the key military elements: mobility and power. The basic game introduces the complexity of administering wealth in the form of Iron, Coal, and Timber, and maintaining balanced holdings. The advanced game allows sudden behind-the-lines attacks via the new element of naval power thus enhancing mobile tactics. Expert play expands the strategic requirements via introducing pre-attack shipments, which require increased planning and foresight.

Chance Level. LORDS has three "chance vs. determinism" options. If your strategic tastes are deliberate and calculating, with low chance you can be certain whether or not you will win an attack. If you like a little spice, but nothing too unreasonable, you can choose medium chance which flips a coin on ties. But if you like staking everything on a come-from-behind surprise move that just might win, then pick the high chance option and hang on!

Map Variety. The configuration of the map on which you play will be central to the game. You can play with the prepared maps, generate random ones, or make your own fashioned after whatever strategic tests you can dream up. Is water important, touching a lot of territories and separating them? Then boats will be crucial. Are water areas small and isolated from each other? Then the main game will be on land. Are territories strung out like a necklace? Then horses will be vital to an advance.

CHOOSING TERRITORIES

This is the "beginning game" where your basic strategy direction is established. It is of course important to occupy territories where resources will be produced but horses are especially important early on as they will tip the balance your way in the first attacks.

I try to pick territories where I can build a city which would bear upon and increase the production of several kinds of resources. Of course I also want

Continued on pg 26

Alternate Reality® The City

Name:	Alternate Reality: The City
System:	Atari, C-64
Price:	$50.00
Designer:	Kathi Tremblay
Publisher:	Datasoft 19808 Nordhoff Place Chatsworth, CA 91311

by Scorpia

There you are, minding your own business, going about your usual activities, without a care (or hardly a care, anyway) in the world. And just like that, everything changes. Without warning, without explanation, you are kidnapped by mysterious aliens. When you recover from this outrage, you find yourself in a small room with only one exit. Beyond the doorway lies a city unlike any you have seen before. Above the doorway is a panel displaying an ever-changing series of numbers. There is no other way out. You step across the threshold....

So begins Alternate Reality, the most ambitious computer game since Time Zone. Planned to cover at least five games, all of them full scenarios in themselves, yet linked together to form one complete whole, this could be a series to reckon with. Maybe. The first in the group, Alternate Reality: The City, has good parts and some not-so-good parts.

You start in that little room, with the city of Xebec's Demise in front of you. The numbers sliding by overhead represent the attributes your character will have the moment you step through the doorway. There is little in the way of choice or control here. You could end up with a very good set of attributes, a mediocre set, or a very bad set, indeed. Once through the door, there is no going back, and you are stuck with what you have.

Your character's stats are composed of Strength, Stamina, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charm, and Skill. You also have Money (you get a little to start with) and Hit Points. Each is determined randomly when you step through the door. Look them over carefully as soon as you're out. If your character comes through with rotten stats overall, re-boot the game and create another one. If you get a decent one, save the game right there and make a couple of back-up disks.

The best way to handle this is to go for high strength and intelligence, and hope for the best with the other attributes. All attributes are important, but at the very beginning, you are extremely vulnerable, and you need at least a couple of good scores if you want to survive. On the Apple version, the numbers (over the door) for strength and intelligence are side-by-side, so keep your finger on the key, and hit it as soon as you see good numbers show up for these two. This does take some precise timing, and you may have to try more than once, but it's worth the effort in the long run.

Once in the city, you will find survival difficult. Thieves and muggers will attack you. Other citizens will steal your money and possessions. Monsters (usually found only at night) will be after your blood. You will need food and water to survive (you get some at the beginning), and a place to sleep when you're tired.

Against this, you have only yourself, a little money, a meager supply of rations, no weapons, no armor. Overall, the prospects are not heartening. The first thing to do is get a weapon; you cannot survive fighting bare-handed, and you WILL have to fight sooner or later, probably sooner. So, the moment you're out the door (and you've backed-up your character), head for the Smithy in the City Square, which is fortunately nearby. You should have enough to buy a stiletto, at least.

Naturally, you want more money. The only way to get it is to kill someone or something. You can't beg and you can't steal (even though everyone else can steal from you). Money and other items become available only after a successful combat. So you are going to have to get into the thick of things practically from the start, whether you like it or not.

There are three ways of killing someone (or thing): in a regular fight, by tricking it, or by charming it. Tricking is dependent on your intelligence. The higher your score in that attribute, the better your chances are, although you also need to take into account what you're up against.

Charming, as you might expect, requires a high Charm rating. As with Tricking, you must consider your opponent. Unintelligent creatures, like Black Slimes, can't be charmed. Tricking, I've found, usually works better overall than Charming. In both cases, though, there is no explanation of WHY a Trick or Charm kills what you're up against. A trick might kill someone, but I haven't figured out yet how you can Charm someone to death.

If your Trick or Charm doesn't work, you're in trouble. You immediately become engaged with your opponent, who gets a free shot at you (ouch!). At this point, you have a number of options, which generally boil down to two: fight back, or try to disengage. If you think you can win, by all means fight, but keep an eye on your hit points. You could end up dead very fast.

Disengaging has its own drawbacks. For instance, it might not work (in which case, another free hit by your opponent). If it does work, many times whoever you're fighting will steal some or all of your possessions (except weapons and armor). Intelligent creatures will take money, gems, jewelry, potions, and compasses. Unintelligent ones grab your food and water. At least you're still alive. For awhile.

Low-level characters should not be running around at night or in the rain. There are too many dangerous monsters out there at those times. If it's night, sleep at an Inn. If it's raining, sit in a Tavern (one you know is open 24 hours) or stand around in one of those empty rooms until the rain stops.

There are many citizens of Xebec's Demise you'll want to avoid fighting at the start. Warriors, Fighters, Gladiators, and Knights, for instance. Knights are especially deadly; they have potent swords, take a lot of damage, and are very hard to hit. They, however, will have no trouble hitting YOU, and after two or three shots from them, you can kiss your character goodbye.

Noblemen should also be avoided; they have magic swords which can do pretty stiff damage, as well. Thieves can also be tough customers. It's best to stick to Commoners and Couriers until you've gone up a bit in the game.

Ok, so here you are, fighting, tricking, charming, trying as best you can to stay alive. What for? Good question. The whole game is designed around two points: (a) completely mapping the city and (b) getting your character up to at least tenth level so it can survive in the next scenario, The Dungeon. That's what The City is all about. There are no other goals, just map and survive.

And mapping is a pain. A REAL pain. Although a map comes with the game, it is very incomplete. You have to fill in the rest, and believe me, it's hard work. For one thing, one step in the game does NOT equal one square on the map. In the Apple version, one map square is equal to about six steps (this may vary among different versions). Just imagine going along, carefully counting your steps, and halfway through you run into an encounter. ARGG!!!

What's even worse, is that after an encounter your position isn't the same as it was before. The program arbitrarily moves you a ahead or behind from where you were before the encounter. So, many times you are forced to re-trace your steps. This is definitely a game for the dedicated cartographer.

But wait...there's MORE! Many of the guilds and other places of interest in the game are behind hidden doors or secret passages. These, of course, are not obvious. Therefore, you must also test each wall as you come to it, by trying to walk through it. Fun, huh?

Speaking of Guilds, there are twelve of them (the docs may say 14, but that's an error, there are only 12). In The City, if you have an Apple, Atari, or C-64, you will NOT be able to join any of them. It's not built into the 8-bit computer versions (whatever the docs may say). Guilds are worthwhile for two reasons only: 1) the very first time you visit one, one of your attributes will be increased (absolutely free!) and 2) you can have cursed items uncursed (for a stiff price). Make sure you check the uncursing prices when you visit a Guild; should you pick up cursed weapons or armor, you want to know where the cheapest place is and get there

as fast as you can.

To help you out a little, here is what you can expect to find in the four city quadrants (so you'll know where to look, and when to stop looking in a particular area). NW: 2 Guilds, 5 taverns, 2 Inns, 1 Smithy, 1 Bank, 1 Healer, and 3 Shops. NE: 4 Guilds, 5 Taverns, 1 Smithy, 4 Shops, and 1 Dungeon Entrance. SE: 2 Guilds, 2 Taverns, 1 Inn, 1 Smithy, 5 Shops, 1 Dungeon Entrance. SW: 4 Guilds, 3 Taverns, 4 Inns, 1 Bank, 1 Healer, and 4 Shops. City Square: 1 Smithy, 1 Bank, 2 Shops.

The Taverns add up to one more than noted in the docs; that is because there are two Mom's Bars (back-to-back but separated by a wall). The Shops also add up to more, because some are duplicates. For instance, there is a cluster of shops, all called Merchant's Grotto. I've counted each entrance as a separate Shop.

All these places have different prices for their services or merchandise, so it does pay to shop around. At the start, the best place to sleep for the night is the Lazy Griffin Inn; just head north along the Main Street, keeping to the west side of the avenue, and you'll find it. Later, when you've done some more exploring, you'll find others that are even less expensive.

The cheapest tavern is called "The Tavern", and can be found (eventually) in the north wall, although locating the way in is not easy. However, they have the lowest prices on food packets and water flasks, so this is a good place to stock up when you have some money. Remember that the bill of fare in the taverns changes hourly, so if they don't have what you want, wait around awhile and try again (wait around OUTSIDE...see below!)

One thing you MUST be careful of is staying until closing time. While some taverns are open 24 hours a day, others are open for business only during certain hours. Should you happen to be in a tavern at closing time, not only will you be unceremoniously kicked out, you will NOT be allowed in that tavern, or any other, ever again. Ridiculous, but that's how it is. And don't buy too many rounds for the house, either, or you'll be kicked out for spending too much money (you figure it out, I can't).

Banks are good places to store your spare cash, when you finally have some. Rates and risks vary from bank to bank. It's best to start with a low-risk account; the interest isn't terrific, but your money is safer that way. Remember that banks aren't open 24 hours a day, so keep some money with you at all times.

Healers are not easy to find, there are only two, their prices are high, and they aren't always in when you call. Also note that paying for any service automatically raises the rates. Thus, if you happen to be both poisoned and low on hit points, the cost for healing will go up after you've been unpoisoned. Unless you have a fair amount of money, Healers aren't too helpful. This is a big drawback when



you're just starting out, as you can't afford a Healer's services. If you've been badly hurt in a fight or two, the only way to heal up is to stay at an Inn for the night.

I haven't yet found any difference among rooms in regard to regaining hit points. A night on the common room floor appears to work as well as a private room with bath. What does seem to make a difference is time of day. You heal faster sleeping at night than in the daytime.

One thing you'll certainly want is a compass, which shows you in which direction you're facing. This is invaluable when moving around at night (or in the rain) or walking through inside passageways. Buy one as soon as you can afford it.

Eventually, you will begin to find potions. There are at least 52 of them in the game. Some are helpful (healing damage, raising attributes), some are neutral (water, milk, fruit juice), and others are bad news (poisons, lowering attributes). You don't know what you have until you drink it. Potions come in a variety of colors and flavors, but different potions could have the same color. A white potion could be milk, or it could be poison. The actual contents of the flask are randomly determined when you open it.

One of the worst potions to drink is the potion of inebriation. This makes you very, very, drunk. You can't see straight or walk straight, and you will be subject to momentary blackouts. No tavern will let you in, and you can't sleep it off at an Inn. The only way to get back to normal is to visit a Healer and have him clean you out. Potions are not something low-level characters should mess with, unless you have the character backed-up.

In time, the game becomes boring. You've mapped the city, you know where everything is, you've visited all the Guilds: there is nothing left but killing monsters. So you stand at night in front of a Healer's shop (precautionary measure) blowing away anything and everything that shows up, and guzzling potions in between. This is not much fun. In fact, it's downright monotonous.

This is probably the blackest mark against The City: it has no sub-goals, there isn't anything else for you to do once the place is mapped out except fight. Of course, you ARE preparing for the scenarios to come, yet you would expect a little more from this game, which has some very nice touches of its own. Certainly more than just hack and slash, which is what it all comes down to.

Graphics, on the Apple, are not very good. All the exterior walls are white with red splotches, and not pleasant to look at. Many of the pictures of people and monsters you encounter have a good deal of red in them, which makes it hard to see them or distinguish them from the walls. Perspective (3-D, you-are-there) however, is quite well done, and does give you the feeling that you're walking around in a real place.

The City supports one or two drives, and is very smart about that. It checks for a second drive on boot-up, and whenever you are prompted to insert a disk, it will also check both drives for it. Further, the program can distinguish among the boot disk, the city disk, and your character disk, so there is no danger that the wrong one will be written on.

Saving can be done at almost any point, except combat, but this ends the game. Restoring is automatic upon boot-up, and your character is removed from the character disk at this time. Therefore, if your character dies, or if you boot without first saving, your character will be lost. Always have at least one back-up of the character disk handy, just in case. By the way, you can have up to four separate characters on one disk.

Overall, I have mixed feelings about <u>Alternate Reality: The City</u>. On the one hand, they've made it very hard to get off to a good start in the game unless you're lucky (or have played before), the mapping is unnecessarily difficult and tedious, the sound on Apple versions can't be turned off (I know one person who finally disconnected his speaker, he couldn't stand it any longer), and in the later stages, the game becomes a dull succession of combats whose only purpose is to raise your character's level.

On the other hand, there IS much to explore and find, and many places that seem to have no purpose may become important later on as more scenarios are added. The turning of day to night and back again (with a sun that actually rises and sets), the passage of time in hours, days, months and years, clear skies and rain, are all good touches, giving a feeling of reality (no puns intended) to the game. And there are many factors beneath the surface that affect your character in subtle ways, which you may or may not discover as you go along.

Bottom line: Recommended, with reservations; a good game for people who enjoy mapping or have a lot of patience...it's not for everyone.

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CONQUEST

Continued from pg. 21

to pick territories so that they help me defend my other holdings. Because territories bear on one another, a compact position is much easier to defend than one spread out all over the map.

Finally, I consider my position in the first play sequence. Am I Lead Player and thus have the first attack? Or am I at the end of the line where I will have to survive several attacks before getting aggressive? If I attack early, I can afford to be spread out more, figuring I can consolidate my position by taking over territories from opponents. If I attack late I need to pay special attention to picking, so that I can defend my territories and stockpile by controlling adjacent territories.

> "Diplomacy is vital in LORDS . . . offering help to other players in return for their help is the name of the game."

TRADING

Trading is one of the most important parts of the game. Generally it is advantageous to you because it quickly enhances your position. But you do not want to provide an immediate opponent with the weapon, horse or boat which will soon be rammed down your throat. I try to analyze my trading partner's needs carefully, and offer him a deal which will subtly work to my advantage. If I'm clever I don't make it so obvious as to kill the exchange. I figure that trade benefits both sides, and those who don't trade will inevitably fall behind.

SHIPMENT

A key shipping move can often tip the power balance of the game. Bringing fighting forces to central spots for defense and possible attacks is usually smart. Horses and boats are very powerful in shipping because they give you mobility. I like to make sure mine are kept in flexible positions, especially when armed with a weapon.

CONQUEST

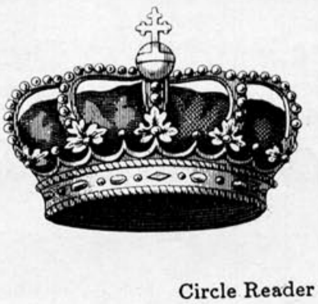
I almost always attack if I can. By doing so I expand my holdings, bolster defenses, and possibly acquire new resources. Since the attack possibilities are visible to all, there should be no surprise element. However, the maps are varied enough and the shipping-into-an-attack moves are complex enough so that many people will not see a weak spot in their defenses until it is too late. Since the support of others is often necessary for a successful attack, diplomacy is vital in LORDS. Seeing what other players need, and what they fear, and offering ways to help them in return for their help is the name of the game. It is also wise not to bring too much strength into a position that you can't defend. After an attack in which I had to bring a lot of force to bear, I often use my second attack to consolidate instead of penetrating further into opposition territory.

DEVELOPMENT

Boats are highly useful, especially if accompanied by a weapon and/or horse. If your territories lie along water and if a weaker player's territories do too, a boat may well be your best early goal. With it you can make sudden, brilliant raids deep into his territory, often even seizing the crucial stockpile.

Unless you develop your resources you will be left far behind your opponents. The usual question is "guns or butter?"; i.e. whether to immediately make a weapon, or whether to make a city instead. A weapon is more powerful in a fight and is mobile. Also, since production does not always happen you may have to wait awhile for your city to benefit you. Nevertheless, I figure it is usually advisable to build a city if I can double several useful items. For one thing, there is some moral odor attached to the player who makes the first weapon, unless sorely besieged. In addition, the city's ability to increase production is of continuing value year after year. Most importantly, cities are the path to the win -- so I'm that much closer to the ultimate goal!

Jack Kittredge is the designer and co-programmer of the C64 version of Lords of Conquest.




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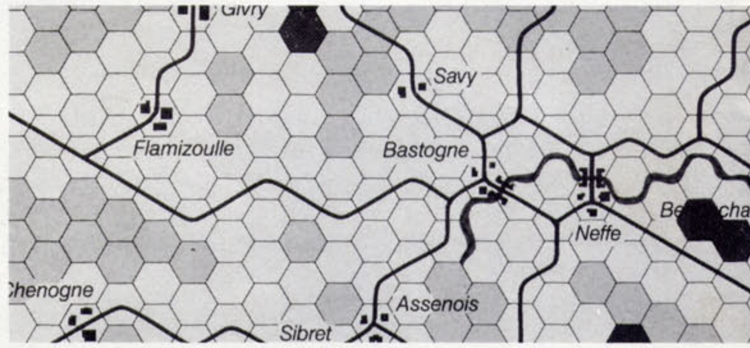
BATTLEFRO

Corps Level Command in World

by Jay Selover

Battlefront

Name:	Battlefront
System:	Apple, C-64
# Players:	1-2
Price:	$40.00
Designers:	Roger Keating Ian Trout
Publisher:	Strategic Studies Group 1747 Orleans Ct. Walnut Creek, CA 94598



Well, the boys at SSG sure fooled me. After their very successful releases, *Carriers At War* and *Europe Ablaze*, the word was that their next release would be an American Civil War game titled *The Road To Appomatox*. When I saw the cover of *Battlefront*, I knew right away that this was not your ordinary Civil War game; not with an American Sherman tank rolling through the ruins of some European town straight towards a band of waiting Germans! No, that's right; Ian Trout and Roger Keating managed to finish their World War II Corps-Level game before the Civil War title and *Battlefront* made its debut at Origins '86 in Los Angeles.

Battlefront, as I mentioned is a Corps level game covering ground combat during World War II. Not exactly a small topic! The way it is able to cover such a vast array of combat situations is that it is a true game kit as well as a game. In the now expected style of SSG, the "design your own" scenario aspects are at least as important as the pre-built scenarios. *Battlefront* gives you the framework within which to build almost any combat situation that occurred in World War II at the level of one Corps per side.

The game package includes one disk (with the game on one side and scenario data on the other); a 48-page book which includes the rules, examples of play, and scenario design data; and two sets of six-by-eight laminated cards with scenario information and details of the various menus in the game. The components are very well done; my only complaint is with the cover art on the package. All I can say about that is "Yuck!"

Well, let's put the album-style package away (please!) and take a look at the game. Roger and Ian have taken a great stride towards demolishing two of the long cherished gripes about computer wargames; that they lacked a realistic "point of view" and that computer wargames could not hope to compete with boardgames since the player could not make changes to the basic system in a computer game where he thought it appropriate.

More on the scenario design later, the "point of view" question is really at the heart of this game. You play a Corps commander about to face a combat situation. Your Corps consists of up to three divisions, each of which contains up to four regiments. You also have several independent battalions which you can attach to any of your divisions and you have the word of your air force buddies that they will be there when you need them. The units which move and fight on the screen are actually the component battalions of the regiments in your Corps, but you can not actually touch them directly. You will be telling each division commander what you want each of his regiments to accomplish during a turn, but then you must sit back and watch how your subordinate units decide to carry out your orders. This game really has the proper perspective of the role that you play in your army, as frustrating as that can be when you watch one key battalion move somewhere you didn't really want them at all.

The System

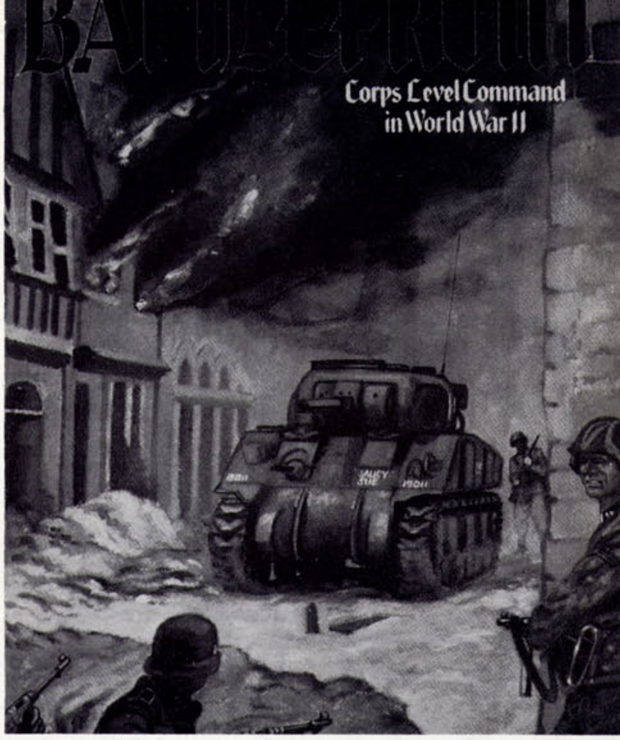
Battlefront uses a scale of about one kilometer per hex (this can vary with the scenarios), and each turn is six hours (there are three daylight turns and one night turn per day). And, of course the unit of maneuver is the battalion. The battlefield can vary with the scenario up to 39-by-28 hexes, scenarios can be up to sixteen days long (seven is average for the provided scenarios), and up to fourteen different unit types. All of this may seem a bit fuzzy, but that is because the system can be adjusted to alter so many of the basic parameters.

The four scenarios provided with the game give an excellent indication of the diversity of the program. The first one covers the German airborne invasion of Crete. The second covers part of the action at Stalingrad. Actually, it covers the attempt by two German Panzer divisions to drive through the Russians and relieve the besieged Von Paulus in

nT

War II





the city. The third scenario takes you half way around the world, to the small island of Saipan where the Americans must land and take the island stronghold from some pretty determined Japanese. Finally, the last scenario is Bastogne; you guessed it, General "Nuts" McCauliffe keeps the Germans (hopefully) from capturing this critical road juncture during the Battle Of The Bulge. These scenarios appear to be selected as much as anything to demonstrate the flexibility of the system to cover everything from the frozen steppes of central Russia to the steamy tropical jungles of the Pacific.

The game itself is completely menu driven, and the menu layouts do bear some striking similarities to SSG's previous offerings. When you get down to the play, though, one big difference becomes apparent. This is not a pseudo-real time game where the action just goes along until you request an interrupt. This a game with real turns. Before each turn, the players are given an opportunity to check the situation, look at the current status of their forces, and issue new orders for the upcoming turn. After each player is finished, the computer takes over and completes the turn, moving and executing combat for all of the units.

The point of view of the player as Corps commander is rigidly adhered to in the limitations placed on the types of orders that the player can issue. Basically, you have the ability to assign objectives but not to get in and meddle with the tactical execution of the battle. During the "Orders Phase", you can call up each of your divisions separately and assign a few items at the divisional level. You can order a move by the divisional headquarters, assign a portion of your limited air support to that division, and you can assign any of your independent battalions to that division for the upcoming turn. Then, you can go in and look at the status of each regiment in the division. The display will show the condition and location of each battalion in the regiment, but you can not talk directly to the battalions. Instead, you give a general order to the regiment, and each of the battalions will carry it out to the best of their abilities. Even the allowable orders are very much in character. You have four options but what the four options are will depend on the contact status of the regiment. A regiment which is not near any enemy units get a very different set of choices from those that are heavily engaged. The movement orders give a good example of the perspective of the game. A regiment which is given a movement order is then given an objective. Objective hexes are pre-designated in the scenario design and represent important landmarks or goals of the historical combatants. Thus, you order a regiment to move to Bastogne, and then it is up to the individual battalions to each select the most efficient way to get there. Another example is the "support" order; when you give this order to a regiment, any battalions which are within two hexes of an enemy will dig in and any uncontacted battalions will move up to support their buddies. But again, you have no direct control over how any one of the battalions will move.

The Play

So, how does it feel to sit there, one step removed from the actual fighting and watch your computerized minions try to execute your plans? Pretty good, actually! The game can be extremely frustrating, but it is the accurate portrayal of your role as Corps commander that causes the frustration, not the game mechanics.

The game itself does take quite a while to get used to. The documentation does not help much. It's better than a lot of what we have seen in computer games, but it does not contain any of the specifics that I like to see. The first seven pages of the rulebook contain a "walk through" of the first turn of the Saipan scenario, and the rest of the rules pretty much explain the functions and capabilities of the various menus. After that, you are pretty much on your own. Expect to lose a few battles before you begin to figure out how to really use your forces effectively. One big lesson to learn real quick is that your units represent men, not machines. Leaving a regiment on the line once it gets really tired is the quickest way I've found to get it ground into dust! Another good lesson is that you don't just go and order assaults by every unit that happens to be close to the enemy! There are some real good orders like "probe", "prepare", and "support", that can make all the difference between a well orchestrated attack and a banzai charge. Oh, and how about one more good lesson; learn the ca-

Continued on pg. 50

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Circle Reader Service #37

by Gregg Williams

As Monty Python's Mary, Queen of Scots said, "I'm not dead yet." That's also the status of the venerable Atari 800, though I fear the end is near. It's been two months since I wrote my last column, so I've got a veritable deluge of games to talk about. Here goes.

Super Boulder Dash

In 1984, Peter Liepa and Chris Gray of First Star Software created (to my knowledge) the first home computer video game good enough to make it--unchanged--into a coin-operated video game. The game play and graphic pyrotechnics of Boulder Dash (the Atari 800 version, of course) were so good that First Star licensed it to some company for coin-op use. I actually saw the coin-op version once and the graphics were identical.

Boulder Dash was an instant classic on the scale of Lode Runner; but, designed for a machine with more horsepower (an Atari vs. an Apple II), it was far more exciting: fast scrolling playfield, scintillating diamonds, good sound effects, and a personable little character called Rockford, who tapped his foot impatiently when he got tired of waiting for you to make a move.

Boulder Dash had 16 caves and four bonus caves, each of which could be played at five skill levels. In each cave, Rockford had to get a certain number of diamonds, then get to an exit door before time ran out. Easy? Are you kidding? There were things that got in the way: boulders, fireflies, butterflies, enchanted walls, and amoebas, each of which represented both a danger and, sometimes, an opportunity. Some caves were straight reflex games, others were puzzles. For example, some caves had no diamonds in them at all; the solution is to drop a boulder on a butterfly, which caused it to explode and change into diamonds. The caves were cleverly designed, and they changed somewhat from level to level, often necessitating different strategies. Unfortunately, the game did not include a construction set, which would have been easy to do and a lot of fun.

In early 1986, Electronic Arts released Super Boulder Dash, and I said, "Oboy, a construction set!" Unfortunately, no--but it's still a great buy. You get a two-sided disk that contains the original Boulder Dash on one side and 20 new screens on the other. The graphics are still impressive, and the design is one of the best I've ever seen. One suggestion: EA gives hints on how to solve each screen; use them if you need them, but try to do without them first--one of the joys of this game is discovering what works.

Atari 800 Buys

To make things even more exciting, EA has reduced the list price of most of its Atari 800 games, including Super Boulder Dash, Archon, M.U.L.E., Pinball and Music Construction Sets, and Seven Cities of Gold--all of these are classics and great



bargains. One place, Tevex (800-554-1162), is selling them for $12 each. Software Discounters of America (800-225-7638) usually has good prices as well).

Strategic Simulations, Inc. (800-443-0100, x335) is closing out two fine games at good prices. Cytron Masters, by Dan Bunten (of M.U.L.E. and Seven Cities fame), is a capture-the-flag combat game that gives you simultaneous play in its two-player mode. No turns on this game--you play as fast as you can move your joystick, and it's a lot of fun! It's selling for $19.98. Fortress, though written in BASIC, is still worth it. It's a simple game, distantly related to Go and Othello, but it's hard to master. One very interesting point is that true AI (artificial intelligence) algorithms in the computer opponents make them get better the more they play--this is very spooky to watch, but it does happen. It's selling for $17.48, and SSI claims a 14-day money-back guarantee--so you should give these games a try.

Short ST Reviews

I apologize for the lack of space for ST reviews. Pretty soon, this column will be nothing but ST reviews, though, so please be patient. Here are some of the games I've been looking at.

Rogue, from Epyx, is a randomized 26-level dungeon game, essentially a souped-up version of the game that's been on minicomputers for years. The graphics are gorgeous (love that ST color monitor!), and the gameplay is okay but repetitious after a while; also, the GEM window interface gets in the way from time to time. Be prepared to get killed dozens of times before you figure out how to stay alive.

The Pawn, from Rainbird, is an fantasy adventure game with highly detailed pictures attached to some (but not all) locations. It had occasional grammatical errors. The parser got confused several times in some rather inexcusable ways. Different locations have the same name, and the program does a lengthy access for the graphic image, even if you are playing the game in text-only mode (this makes moving across the map slow and tedious). I also found the scenario indistinguishable from those of countless other fantasy adventures.

The Activision Little Computer People Discovery Kit is an odd entertainment--mostly for children. When you boot the disk, the program shows you a 3-story house that is inhabited by a little video man and his dog. He writes you letters, plays simple games, watches TV, builds a fire, even (discretely) goes to the bathroom. You have to feed your LCP (as he's called) occasionally, or he turns green (no, he never dies--I tried). It's cute and well done, but the genre really has more potential than is used here, and I hope someone "fleshes out" the idea someday.

For those of you who like golf, Accolade's Mean 18 is really well done. It's a golf game that simulates three famous courses, St. Andrews, Augusta, and Pebble Beach, and even lets you design your own. It has tons of options and simulates both the hitting and the trajectory of the ball well.

Next Month

Unfortunately, I've had to save the best ST game for next month: Activision's Hacker II, by Steve Cartwright. It's stunning visually, and the plot is even better than the original: you remotely control three robots smuggled into an enemy office building, and you have to find and escape with a secret document. It looks very good, but I'll have more details next month. Until then, remember--things always take longer than they take.

OVER THERE!

by Leslie B. Bunder

Hello and welcome to another edition of 'Over There'. As is usual, I've got a good selection of the latest news, views and gossip coming out of England, as well as competitions which you can enter.

Competition

Here we go again, it's competition time!! Up for grabs this issue is the chance to win a copy of the latest game from CRL called Cyborg. This game is good looking plays real mean which makes it a real challenge. I have five copies of the cassette version for the C-64/128 to give away. All you have to do it think up something that is very funny about what the letters CRL stand for, the funniest suggestions win a copy of the game.

Address your entries to 'CRL Competition' at the address given at the end of this article. Good luck.

News... Views... Gossip

To celebrate the fact that 'Star Trek' is 20 years old, Beyond Software of England are all set t release a computer strategy game based on the TV series. This project is one of the largest ever undertaken by an English software house. Beyond Software is well known for its excellent strategy games such as 'Lords of Midnight' and 'Shadowfire'. Star Trek is being designed by Mike Singleton (who wrote 'Lords of Midnight') and is being programmed by some ex-members of Denton Designs who wrote 'Shadowfire'. The game will incorporate speech synthesis. It will be released initially for the C-64/128, Atari ST, Spectrum, and Amstrad. Versions for other micros such as the Amiga and Apple are being considered.

The mystery surrounding the computer game version of The Hunt For Red October has been solved. Argus Press Software will be bringing out a computer version around Christmas time. The game will be a submarine simulation/strategy game. Commented Peter Holme of Argus: "We are very pleased to have the computer rights and we plan something very special for its release."

Also set for release from Argus, though not yet confirmed, is the home computer version of the arcade game Pac Land. Talking of arcade games, Gaunlet is set for release from U.S. Gold for the C-64, Amstrad and Spectrum.

An official computer version of Trivial Pursuit is all set for release from Domark. Versions for the C-64, 8 bit Atari, Amstrad and Spectrum will be released.

Dragon's Lair, the hit arcade game of a couple years ago, has now been converted to run on home computers by Software Projects. It will run on the C-64, Amstrad and Spectrum.

Remember the excellent Way To The Exploding First from Melbourne House? Well, the sequel, entitled Fist 2, is set for release shortly and would appear to be quite stunning. There will be over 100 screens of continuous scrolling and you can control your warrior with over 20 joystick generated moves (C-64, Amstrad, Spectrum).

Mastertronic, the budget software house, is bringing out a computer version of Flash Gordon for the C64/128. It sounds quite interesting. Be on the lookout for some of the newer budget titles from Mastertronic; they are quite stunning (e.g. Kik Street 128 and Finders Keepers).

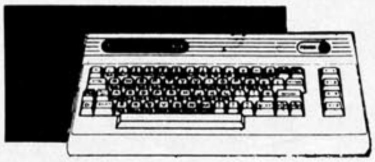
Keep Those Letters Coming

It's really nice to receive letters from you folks out there in the States. If you wish to write me about any aspect of the English Gaming World, please feel free. Write to: Leslie B. Bunder, 50 Riverside Close, Cuckoo Ave., Hanwell, London W7 1BY, England. If you wish to receive a personal reply be sure to enclose two international reply coupons. I look forward to hearing from you.

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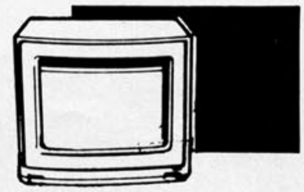
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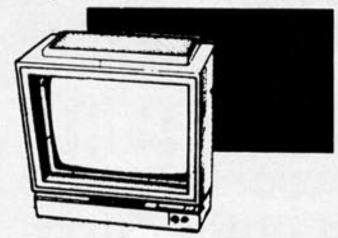
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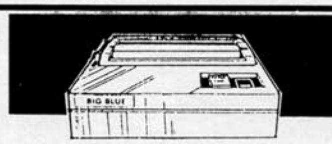
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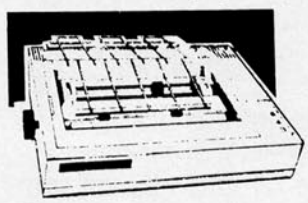
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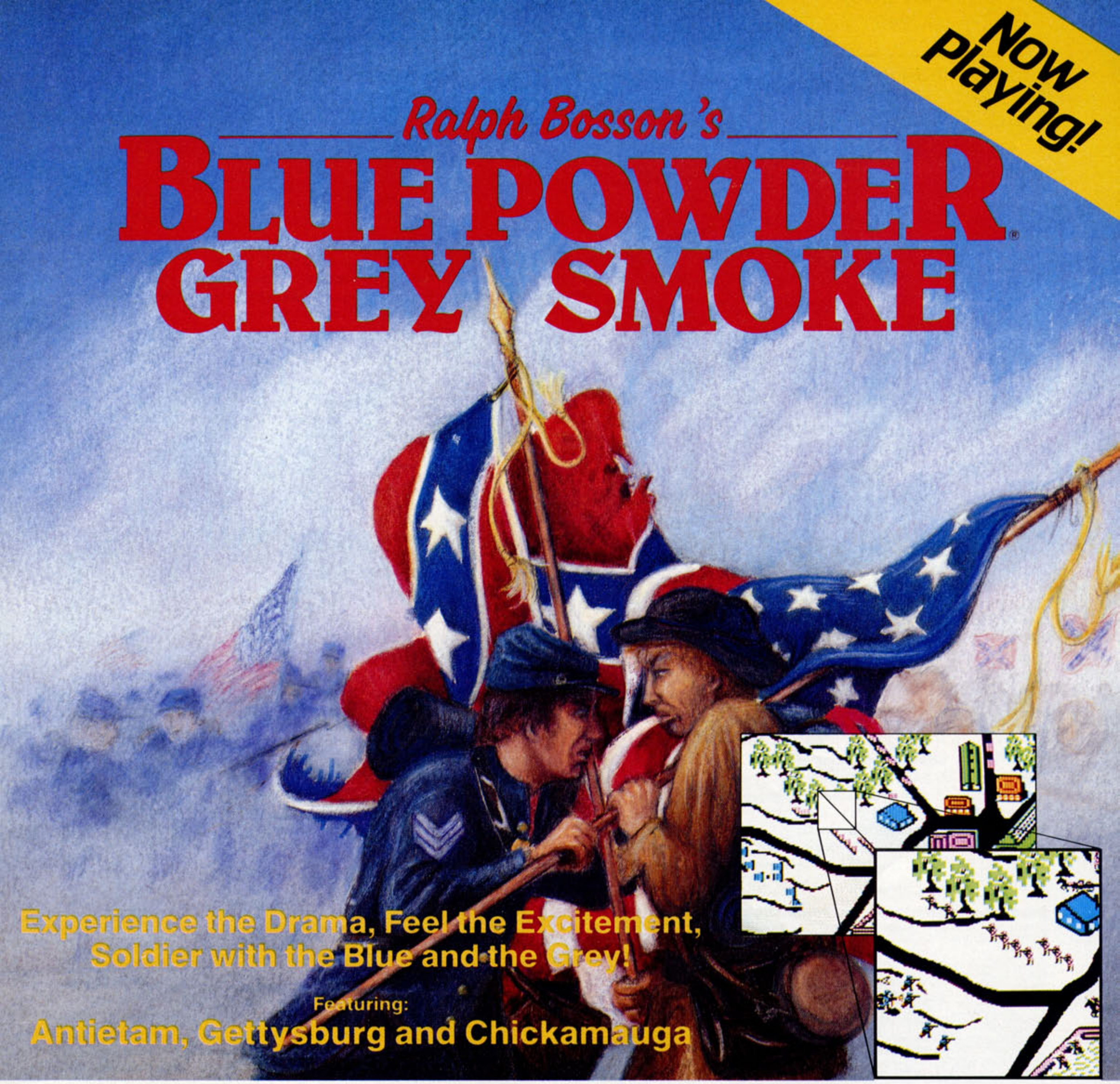
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by Roy Wagner

More Of The Same, But Better

Archon II: Adept from EA is a worthy sequel to it's excellent predecessor Archon. Where Archon was a strategic and tactical struggle between Light and Darkness, Adept is a conflict between Order and Chaos. The powers of battle are conducted by four Adepts. Each Adept has available a full range of spells (Summon, Heal, Weaken, Imprison, Release, Banish, and Apocalypse).

As the game begins, it is four against four in a "world" with five distinct elements (Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Void). Each element affects the conditions of combat. Each Adept is able to summon four different Elementals or four different Demons to face its enemy in the field of battle. The Adepts themselves may also enter battle. Combat is always one-on-one. The object of the game is for one side to occupy six power points, four of which change location from turn to turn.

Archon and Adept are similar in some respects to chess, but go beyond it with each pieces capture resulting in an "arcade" like battle on a separate screen. For those not much into this latter aspect of the game, you can select a "cyborg" option in which the computer resolves the individual battle and you can just concentrate on strategic moves. (If you feel like a little arcade action, you can briefly override and take control of an individual battle.)



Both games are controlled with a joystick in Port #2 for one player against the computer. With two players, a joystick must be used in Port #1. There is no option to use a mouse. There are three levels of player handicapping which make this game much easier to play against the computer or with an adult playing a child.

Both of these games look very complex when one first looks at them, due in most part to the number of various different player pieces involved. After a few games, these come to be better understood and one can concentrate more strategy, which is the major element of each game. These games on the Amiga are well done and enhanced somewhat from earlier versions for other machines. They don't take advantage of using menus or mouse control. If you are interested in a challenging strategy game, I recommended both Archon and Adept.

Go Ahead - Lose Your Marbles!!!

Marble Madness from EA gives you an extremely popular arcade game for your Amiga. This game hit the arcades in the Spring of 1985 and became a favorite of many of the software artists at Electronic Arts. Not content to see their quarters disappear so quickly and knowing the capabilities of the home computer, especially the Amiga, the challenge was there to equal it. The contract was signed for the rights to do the official version of the arcade game. The challenge was met and it resulted in a game the equal in thrills and action to the original.

The game takes place in a three dimensional tiled world of sloping surfaces with uphills, obstructions and other moving things to block your movement of a marble through a GOAL at each level. Each of the six levels become more challenging. Each has its own musical theme in stereo and distinct "personality".

The graphics and action are outstanding. The game play is great. One or two players can "run" the course at the same time. A mouse, joystick, or two types of trackballs can be used by either player. The game action is somewhat slower with two players, but not that bad. There are eight levels of difficulty, though these seem to only vary the amount of time that one has to complete the six levels. The marble can even be given an extra burst of speed by pressing the button on the controlling device.

This games nearly fills the 880K Amiga disk. Probably due to there being no remaining space, the game does not save the "top" scores. For a game of this type, that is a disappointing omission. Unless you remember or write down previous scores, each new game is just that, a NEW game. The challenge of trying to BEAT a previous score is missing without the vanity board. It would have been better to leave out the two player option in lieu of the scoreboard.

Also since you can "ONLY" play this game and not run anything else on your Amiga, the startup sequence is rather awkward. Rather than going directly into the game, you must click on two icons before things get started. Once a game has been started there is no way to restart the the game.



After several months playing various games on the Amiga, I went into a commercial game arcade. What surprised me the most was that the same "great" games of a year ago did not look anywhere near as impressive. I went in particular to take a look at Marble Madness and that too was a lesser match for the version on the Amiga. The graphics were nearly identical in resolution and quality, but the "physical" action of the marbles and various other elements of the game appeared more realistic on the the Amiga version. For arcade action, Marble Madness is highly recommended.

Another Form Of Madness

Mind Walker from Commodore (but done by Synapse), is true madness of the ultimate form. This is game is the most challenging game currently available. It more fully uses the features of the Amiga than any other game. In many respects it is a bizarre cross between Adept and Marble Madness. It is strategy, it is arcade and it is MADNESS.

You are a physics professor that has gone mad from years of detailed work. You are lost in your own internal world of your mind. Your personality is a four way split of a Human, Wizard, Spriggan, and Water Nymph. In these four forms you must wander in the Mind, the Brain and the

Subconscious in order to find and piece together your Sanity.

You begin in the Mind. Your goal is to trace a path of coherent thought from one crystalized thought to a flashing square. This path can only be traced using a single being of your personality over each type of terrain particular to that body form. When you change terrain, you must change body form. This is done by finding a "Pyramid" under which you cycle through each body form. Once you have completed a path you must find a square with a "Tube" on it, to get you to the next level. But this is not at all easy to complete. There are several obstacles to interfere with your success. Throughout the area of the mind are "bad thoughts" that attack you, if you do not escape their domain or destroy them with your "Fractal Ray". Also there are certain screens that are "Booby-Trapped" and only good thoughts can help you escape their hold on you.

The mind is a vast three dimensional area of multiple levels and terrains. Assisting your movement is a large map of your current and surrounding area. Even more mind can be displayed, if necessary. This "map" screen will show you the locations of thought crystals, pyramids, tubes, and your path. It also displays the domains of each body form.

Once you have a path of coherent thought, an area of complete thought is created. This "unlocks" the tubes and the passage to your Brain. Once in a tube, you fall down a long passageway with transparent green doorways to the physical brain floating towards you. You must catch one of these doors between your two hands which are visible on the screen using your joystick. Strangely, the joystick movements seem physically opposite your logical expectations. Beyond the green door is your brain, a maze of static neurons emitting sparks of synaptic impulses and "vicious viruses" that attack your body form and drain your strength.

Your goal in the brain is to find the container of your "Shards of Sanity". There is no visible map here, but rather the sound of pounding and an increase in temperature as you near your goal. Once you have the container of shards you must return to the entry tube so that you may escape to the Subconscious, the final level. You may defend yourself against virus attacks with a thought reflector that rotates around your body form. The neurons are also dangerous when firing, but often you may be forced to go through them as they often grow around the escape tube.

In your Subconscious, the seven most recent shards of sanity are displayed. You must place these correctly into an area that contains forty-two locations. You use the mouse to place the shards. Once all are correctly placed you return to the Mind once again to continue your quest to complete your sanity.

You may only return to the mind when you have correctly places ALL seven shards. This is rather difficult at first, when there are forty-two possible locations for each shard. But assistance is available as Uncle Sigmund is present in the subconscious. He will show you where a shard goes, at a cost of game points.

If not apparent from the discussion of this game so far, This game is very complex, but it's presentation is outstanding. The "music" and sounds of the game are excellent. You are missing a lot if you do not hook this game up to an external stereo system. The graphics are very good. I only wish that the mind map were displayed quicker since I found that I needed to switch screens between the mind and map quite frequently. The manual for this game is extremely well written and colorfully illustrated.

The games has all the "necessary" options that I like to see in a game. It has three preset games wherein the terrain of the mind and the brain are always the same. And there is also the option to randomly generate a new game. You may vary the difficulty of any game. You may save eight games (an absolute necessary in this game). Games are saved only by a letter id (A-H). I much prefer the option to "name" or identify my saves. Also a FAME screen displays the top twenty scores with a three initial identifier. You may select not to put your score on the list also. This game is highly recommended as an very sophisticated arcade type game.

Recommendations

With the gift giving season nearly here, I offer the following to be worthwhile presents:

Action Arcade:
MARBLE MADNESS (EA)
Best Implementation:
MIND WALKER (COMMODORE/SYNAPSE)
Interactive Fiction:
Any Interactive Fiction from INFOCOM
Sports Simulation:
MEAN 18 (ACCOLADE)
Combat Simulation:
ARCTIC FOX (EA)
Best Simulation:
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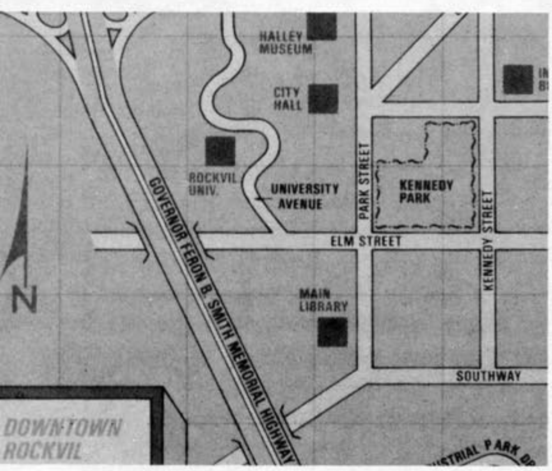
A Mind Forever Voyaging

As Told By Scorpia

Ah, November! My favorite month! Bare trees, cold winds, long dark nights; the perfect time of year to get cozy with a warm computer and some good adventure games. But don't let me keep you here by the door...step in, settle down by the fireplace, and Fred will pour you something to take the chill off. Hmmm. That vacation trip to London didn't seem to do you much good. Had you going round in circles, eh? Well, it doesn't matter. I mean, you didn't really think you were an actual person, did you? Surprise!

A surprise indeed, to find that you are, in fact, a computer simulation and not a real person. Your entire life has been lived out, not in the physical world, but within the circuitry of a computer system. PRISM - Perry Sim - the first truly successful experiment in artificial intelligence.

And successful not a moment too soon. The world is in bad shape, and getting worse by the minute. To deal with this sad state of affairs, a Plan has been proposed,



a Plan that calls for bold and decisive actions. It sounds good but: will it work? No one knows. Those who back the Plan are sure it's the solution, still there are some who aren't quite sure.

So, Perry Sim gets a job. A computer simulation of the world ten years hence will be created, based on putting the Plan in action. Perry's task is to enter that simulation, and report on the results. Very simple.

Of course, it isn't going to be quite so simple as all that. Yet, A Mind Forever Voyaging (AMFV) is unlike any other Infocom adventure. There are hardly any puzzles to solve until almost the very end of the game. No treasures to gather, no bottomless chasms to cross, no locked doors to open. More than anything else, AMFV is an electronic novel, in which you, as Perry Sim, observe the Plan's results as they unfold through the years.

However, don't get the idea that you just sit there and watch, although you'll be doing a lot of that. Perry DOES have an assignment, after all, and there are certain things he must record. Finding a few of the places on the list may take awhile, even with the cute map that comes with the game. It doesn't show you everything, so some exploring is necessary. Fortunately, there are no mazes in the game (yay!), so mapping is quite straightforward.

And there are some other things Perry must be familiar with: the various connections he has, called Modes. Communications Mode, for instance, allows him to view various areas of the PRISM Project installation, such as the rooftop, the maintenance core, and Dr. Perelman's office, among others, as well as giving him access to the World News Network.

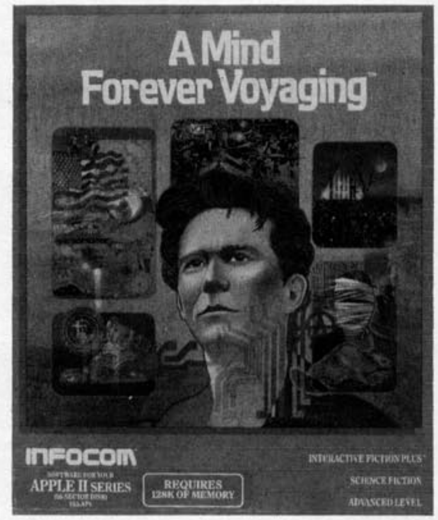
Interface Mode lets Perry interact with some of the minor computers that control things such as the life support systems of the installation, the traffic in the real world, and the computer that runs the simulations he will enter.

In Library Mode, Perry has access to a number of interesting files including data on the Plan. There is also a Sleep Mode (yes, even computers, it seems, need rest from time to time!). To get through the game successfully, it is necessary for Perry to know about all of these things and how to work with them. There is plenty of time between simulations, so use it wisely.

Keep in mind also that Perry lives in this world. It's the world he grew up in, back when he thought he was a human being. He has a family here, as well as a job (fortunately, his job is being a writer, so he has all this free time to run around the city making recordings). Rockvil is a perfect simulation of reality. What happens inside the computer can also happen outside, where Rockvil actually exists. This is what makes the simulations of the future so shattering.

Part 1 is pretty simple and straightforward. Perry enters the 10 year simulation, records everything on his list, and then "returns" with his buffer full of data. Keep in mind that the buffer has a limit, so don't run around with the recorder going all the time. Just use it where you have to and turn it off in between. If you don't get everything the first visit, you'll be sent back to record anything you missed.

Well, the world ten years up the line looks pretty good, huh? Dr. Perelman and his associates are certainly excited over the



results. However, this also leaves you with nothing much to do at the moment. Boredom strikes. What's a sentient computer to do? Snoop around, of course. Take a peek at the Simulation Controller. Oho! It's been quietly chugging away on its own, and now has a 20 year simulation ready.

This is Part 2, covering simulations for 20-50 years ahead. It is much like Part 1, in that you are still walking around observing the changes through the years and making recordings of what you see and experience. However, you will quickly notice that the further ahead in time you go, the nastier the world becomes. There are many changes, none for the better, and several items on the old list aren't available any longer. The Plan is turning out to be a lot worse than anyone expected.

Which brings up the major problem of the game. The people backing the Plan, especially Senator Ryder, claim that Perry's recordings are fakes. They aren't going to let anything stop them now. Especially not "simulated data" from a make-believe person.

And so we come to Part 3. At last, Perry gets a chance to show he can do more than just watch, although again, that too is important. Things get off to an unpleasant start when the PRISM installation is taken over by the National Guard (one guess who's behind that). Then Ryder storms into Perelman's office, delivers a vitriolic diatribe (charming fellow), and stomps out again, with Perelman dragged along by the soldiers. Hooboy!

If I were you, I'd be feeling real nervous right about now. Ryder is certainly up to something, and whatever it is, it's nothing good. If you wait too long, Perry Sim will just be history. Better keep an eye out around the installation. You never know who you might see! And don't forget about Interface Mode..there ARE some things you can fiddle with yourself.

Ok, you've managed to overcome this threat, but you can't keep this up forever. Somehow, you must put an end to Ryder and his schemes once and for all. Now, if you could prove to everyone what Ryder is really like, show his true colors to the world, that would do the job. Better hurry, though, because time is running out.

Whew! So much for Ryder and his grubby Plan. The world will be a much better place without it. And now comes the reward. Oh yes, it isn't over yet! So many times, a game ends with a brief "Congratulations, you saved the universe. Rah rah" message, sort of taking the edge off your achievements. After all the hard work you put into finishing an adventure, you want something a little snazzier, some real recognition for your efforts.

Well, while there may not have been too many puzzles to solve here, you really have saved the world from a nightmarish future. And that accomplishment merits something very special. Computers, after all, are people, too. You've just proved that.

So, what is this terrific endgame? Ah, you'll just have to play the adventure through to find out! But, believe me, it's well worth it! Perry Sim, ever and always, a mind forever voyaging.....

I see by the invisible clock on the wall it's that time again. Before we close the doors, tho, a special hint for all you Bard's Tale players out there. From my mail, it seems that a lot of folks are having some problems getting into Mangar's Tower. They get the Onyx Key from Kylearan, go dashing madly off to Mangar's gate....and they STILL can't get in! Well friends, that Onyx Key is only for Mangar's front door, it's NOT the key to the gates! The only way past that gate (for now, you may find another later) is to pay a visit to the sewers, level 3. And remember, there are no big neon signs that say "Mangar lives here".

That about does it for this issue. As always, if you or any of your IMF force are....err...oops!...AHEM...as always, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways: On Delphi: visit the GameSIG (found under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: stop in at the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). On the Source: send SMAIL to ST1030. By U.S. mail (remember to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope if you live in the United States!):

Scorpia P.O. Box 338 Gracie Station New York, NY 10028

Until next time, happy adventuring!

Continued from pg. 15

was capable of animation this good.

Next comes the sound, which is Silicon Beach's best effort yet--and that's saying a lot. Eric Zocher, VP of Silicon Beach and their sound specialist, may know more about Macintosh sound than anyone else alive--including the Macintosh designers--and he's gone all-out to make this his best work yet. The sound effects for Dark Castle were actually recorded in a studio using the talents of the person who was the voice behind Fred Flintstone, and they're marvelous.

And finally, Dark Castle is filled with lots of little touches that show it's one of the first steps toward what Silicon Beach likes to call "interactive cartoons." When your on-screen character falls a little too far, he will spin around in a circle (with stars above him), then shake his head as if he's groggy. When he walks off the edge of a cliff, he doesn't immediately fall; first, he looks down and sees that there's no ground below him, then falls, a la Wile E. Coyote. Perfect!

And as icing on the cake, Silicon Beach has decided not to copy-protect Dark Castle. Marketing an 800K game presented a problem: should they distribute it on one 800K disk (convenient for Mac Plus owners, but making it impossible for old Macintosh owners to use), or distribute it on two 400K disks (making life great for old Macintosh owners, but requiring disk swaps for Mac Plus owners with no external drive)? In the end, they just decided to trust people and let them make their own working copy of the game onto whatever size of disk they like. Hurrah for common sense!

Corrections And Acknowledgements

In my August review of Flight Simulator, I implied that the only possible reason for Sublogic to replace the Mac's standard menu-handling software was to ease the translation of FS between different computers. Although that is certainly a valid possibility, it has been pointed out to me that another reason they might have written their own menu software is that the Mac's takes control of the machine: virtually nothing else can take place while a menu is being held down. As you may know, flying continues in FS even while a menu is in use. I stand corrected--but I still don't know why they did it. Do you? If so, send your answer to: Why Did They Do It?, 10 Downing Street, London, England.

My other correction is to my September/October review of Race Car Simulator. In it, I listed four pre-designed tracks that I said came on the disk with RCS. As Dom DeLuise said in Blazing Saddles, "Wrong!" The tracks I listed actually come in the form of screen dumps in the manual. The tracks on disk are completely different.

And for acknowledgements, I'd like to thank Ezra Shapiro, columnist for Byte magazine, for his insights into how Surgeon might be used in the medical field. I'd like to especially thank David Whiteman, a senior-year medical student at the University of California at San Diego, for his excellent and extensive critique of Surgeon's accuracy.

Keeping In Touch

I encourage your comments--and thank those readers who have already written for their suggestions. You can help me make this column as good as it can be by writing to me at: 4568 Georgia St. #2, San Diego CA 92116. Or you can reach me at the following electronic addresses:

MCI Mail: fboosman

BIX: frankb

Until next month, keep playing those games!

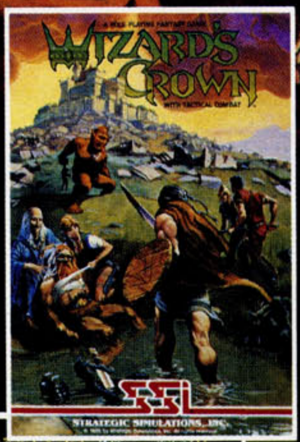
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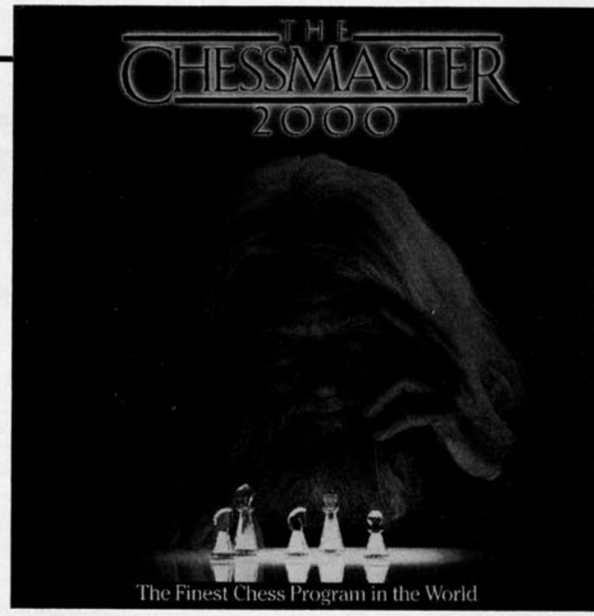


ON DISK FOR 48K APPLE® II SERIES AND C-64™.





THE CHESSMASTER 2000



by Bill Oxner

Name:	Chessmaster 2000
System:	Most
Price:	$39.95
Publisher:	Software Country 9713 Santa Monica Blvd. #204 Beverly Hills, CA 90210

The King is dead. Long live the King! The crown has been passed in the world of personal computer chess programs. It happened in Mobile, Alabama, in July of this year. *Chessmaster 2000* (C2000) won the Personal Computer class of the United States Open Computer Chess Championship. The competition, sponsored by the United States Chess Federation, pitted 18 programs in a three-day, round-robin style tournament. C2000 emerged the winner, defeating programs running on super computers, dedicated chess-playing machines and PC programs from the US, Europe and Asia. It became the only off-the-shelf program to ever win this event.

Chess addicts may be satisfied knowing only the raw power of the program, yet C2000 has much more to offer. It begins with a slick, professional package. Included is an excellent booklet containing a brief introduction to chess rules, a history of the game, a library of 100 classic games and a selection of chess problems. The 100 games are a nice touch. The games are stored on the program disk and can be replayed (move by move) and analyzed. The quality of the documentation is first-class.

C2000 is a menu-driven program. There are almost too many options to list in a short review. In the Playing the Game Menu you can select as your opponent C2000, another human or autoplay. Next is the level of play. There are 12 levels, ranging from 60 moves in 5 minutes to 40 moves in 6000 minutes. The latter is recommended only for play-by-mail games unless your boredom threshold is extremely high. The more time that C2000 is permitted, the more moves ahead (plys) it will plan. There is a further option allowed (Easy Mode) where C2000 will "think" while it waits for you to move. This option alone sets it apart from most computer chess programs. The next option allows you to set the style of C2000's play. It can be set to play Normal (mixes best and random moves), Coffeehouse (more random) or Best (always best moves). If you find you are losing too often you can "brain-damage" the program by setting it for Coffeehouse.

C2000 has perhaps the largest "opening book" of any PC chess program, a claimed 71,000 moves. Most classic openings, such as the Ruy Lopez, seem to go about seven moves deep before the book is exhausted. The book can be set On or Off.

You may choose to play the white or black pieces and can switch back and forth during play. If you are bored you can force C2000 to move instantly rather than wait for it to complete its thinking. If you make a mistake or want to analyze a line of play you can delete as many moves (both sides) as you wish. Moves deleted can also be recalled.

Screen options are equally good. The board can be displayed in 2 or 3 dimensional representation. Screen colors may be changed. The time clock and move display are optional. You can rotate the board (90 or 180 degrees) for a different perspective. You can display captured pieces, list all moves made so far, or have C2000 display what moves and countermoves it is thinking about. You can "ask" C2000 for a hint and it will suggest what it considers your strongest move. Teaching mode will display all possible moves for a chosen piece. Sound is optional. This feature allows you to leave the computer and still be alerted when C2000 has made its move, yet another example of the excellent quality built into the program. Finally, you can ask C2000 to display the line of play that it is predicting (when it made its last move), whether it thinks it is ahead or behind and how many plys it searched before making that move. These are all features that add an extra dimension to playing the game and cannot be found in such numbers in any other PC chess program.

The game can be used to solve chess problems or

analyze lines of play. You can set up the board piece by piece, make moves and then instantly return to the original situation. You can save a current game to disk at any time and any number of games can be stored. Classic games can also be loaded and replayed. Moves can also be sent to a printer.

The analysis options are very detailed. You can play a game, store it to disk and then ask C2000 to analyze every move for one or both sides. It will show what it feels was the strongest move and give a "score". The score represents C2000's analysis of the overall game situation at that time using piece counts and positions. Analysis can be displayed on the screen, sent to a printer or stored in a disk file that can be read by any word processing program.

It should be obvious by now but C2000 also handles the more mundane requirements of a good chess program. Castling, capturing pawns en passant and pawn promotion.

In addition to technical details and options, computer games also have a subjective "feel". C2000 has a professional quality from boot-up to mate. The pre-game menus are clearly labeled and easy to utilize. The graphics are superior. During many hours of play (IBM version) not a single bug was detected. The developers claim three years of effort went into creating C2000 and the final product demonstrates that attention to detail.

Your reviewer is a good chess player. I found that I could hold my own and defeat the program up to about level four. In all honesty I feel the program would probably beat me consistently at higher levels. The program is very "solid" in its play, it simply doesn't make errors. In contrast to other chess programs it is also very alert on defense. Victories, even at level two, were hard-fought contests that went 50 or 60 moves. It seems to have a bit more "imagination" than other programs, although the day is still far off when a computer program will sacrifice a queen (as Bobby Fischer did) in order to mate in ten moves. One great feature of the program is that it will resign when it sees a hopeless position, it does not force you to grind out an inevitable win.

I wish I could find something negative to include in this review but I can't. Even the price ($39.95 for IBM) represents a good value. Chessmaster 2000 is the finest chess program I have ever encountered. It is powerful, flexible and fun to play. I feel it will be a standard for years to come. It gets my absolutely highest recommendation.

ROMMEL
BATTLES FOR TOBRUK

Title:	Rommel: Battles For Tobruk
System:	Atari, Apple, C-64
Price:	$40.00
Designer:	Frank Chadwick
Publisher:	Game Designer's Workshop P.O. Box 1646 Bloomington, IL 61702



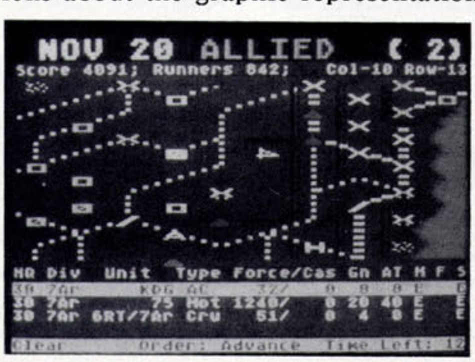
by M. Evan Brooks (c) 1986

Rommel is GDW's latest release in the computer wargaming market. The simulation covers the four major battles for Tobruk (Brevity, Battleaxe, Crusader and Gazala). The computer permits one to play either British or Axis or utilize a two-player option. Unfortunately, the computer does not normally play itself (this can be a valuable learning lesson); however, by timely saves of the game and resetting the options, the computer can be forced to play itself, although the mechanics thereof are somewhat clumsy.

The designer, Frank Chadwick, is a boardgame designer of repute. His previous design efforts are among the best in the boardgame field, e.g. *A House Divided*, *Operation Crusader*, *Fall Of Tobruk*, *8th Army*.

Rommel is extremely detailed, with options available of fatigue, supply, limited visiblity and air strikes. One may choose how many of these options to utilize; each adds realism to the simulation, but at a cost of playability. The basic problem is that a game may be very detailed and still playable; however, *Rommel* is rarely playable, and with the multitude of wargame designs available, this reviewer does not think that *Rommel* will receive a favorable reception.

The graphics are primitive, and not state-of-the-art. The game was first shown in an early design stage at Origins '85 (the National Wargaming Convention). Even then, this reviewer had reservations about the graphic representation. Four



strategic maps are available (German positions, British positions, both positions and terrain). The tactical map shows only a portion of the playing area, and it is here that orders are inputted. The tactical map may be scrolled by joystick or keyboard; however, an unpleasant "flicker" effect is created and scrolling is limited to vertical and diagonal, not horizontal. GDW claims that this is because *Rommel* is one of the few computer simulations to use a true hexgrid, but the overall effect can be tedious. Turn resolution is accomplished on the strategic map; both movement and combat occur by amorphous pixels moving and having combat. This review may be saved, with a full game's saves becoming a virtual docu-drama. While this is a nice touch, the basic primitiveness of such resolution is questionable.

Even more important is the computer artificial intelligence. Depending upon the degree of complexity and options chosen, the computer may take anywhere from 3-15 minutes in order to decide how to act. This does NOT include resolution, but merely the computer deciding upon its strategy. As the programmer points out, in a two-player version, this is not a handicap. But, the vast majority of wargame simulations are played solitaire. Given that, the computer response time is totally inadequate.

Most of the time is spent with the artificial intelligence determining the front line. The programmer, Mark Miller, stated that *Rommel* takes a fresh look at the situation each turn. The program

does not use a decision-tree branching analysis. This reviewer is not really certain of the advantages in *Rommel*'s approach; suffice it to say that the time delay outweighs any increase in realism.

The programmer noted that *Rommel* was composed of 38,000 source lines and 13,000 data lines. This is an extremely long program, using virtually both sides of the Atari disk version (for comparison, Microprose's Kennedy Approach is c. 17,000 lines in its entirety). Thus, there is a lot of information contained in *Rommel*; the flaw is that most gamers will not have the patience to dig it out.

The documentation is voluminous. However, there are two omissions: (1) player hints are brief, at best and (2) a bibliography is lacking. Mr. Chadwick has stated that the sources mainly used in developing the game were the official German and Australian histories as well as information he had gleaned from many prior design efforts in the boardgaming field. The map insert is extremely detailed and reminiscent of board wargames. Although GDW denies it, *Rommel* has the appearance of a board wargame adapted for the computer as an afterthought, and this appears to be *Rommel*'s primary failure.

Fatigue and visibility options add increased realism. The supply option is among the most detailed ever in a computer simulation, as are the air strikes. Supply can be traced from each corps HQ to its subordinate units; in the longer scenarios, this will drive one's strategy. This is correct -- the Desert War was a conflict of logistics; long periods of relative inactivity except for logistics acquisition were followed by short intensive combat which ended as the logistics chain became overextended. *Rommel* does an excellent job of recreating this aspect of the war.

Just as important are the Corps Tables. These portray enemy/friendly status. The most interesting facet of *Rommel*'s limited visibility is that the enemy Corps Table is, by necessity, incomplete; in effect, it becomes the player's G2 (intelligence and enemy order of battle). Only those enemy units adjacent to or previously in contact with one's forces will be revealed, and much of the information shown may be dangerously out of date. But such is the life of the commander!

Air strikes simulate tactical bombing raids. One must determine sorties and target prioritization, while keeping range data and changing battlefield conditions in mind. Bombing raids mistimed are

worse than useless; they can cause friendly casualties or even support an enemy counterattack. However, their proper use may well retrieve an otherwise doomed position.

Victory conditions are similar for each scenario. Generally, control of key terrain (especially Tobruk) coupled with a favorable combat kill ratio determine the victor. The German player must realize that Tobruk may often be unattainable; in that case, his tactics will be limited to forcing large British casualties. Similarly, the British player must examine the victory conditions and avoid the historical mistake of reacting piece-meal. Coherent strategic plans coupled with tactical expertise are the keys to victory.

Rommel permits multi-stacking in hexes. This will allow a proper 'schwerpunkt' deployment as well as maximum defensive positions. However, the player must carefully examine the hex to insure that he is aware of all units therein. Also, unless one is careful, horrendous traffic jams may be created that delay tactical implementation.

Overall, *Rommel* is an extremely detailed simulation. But the detail clutters playability to an unconscionable degree so that *Rommel* becomes an exercise in frustration. The designer and programmer were very helpful and cooperative in answering any questions this reviewer had. Their assistance is deeply appreciated, and this reviewer wishes that this review would be able to repay them in kind. But *Rommel*'s flaws will doom it to the back of most gamer's shelves.

GDW's previous computer simulation, *Chickamauga*, was favorably reviewed by Computer Gaming World (Jun-Jul 85). That review noted *Chickamauga*'s success as being two-fold: physical implementation coupled with the design modelling the battle. Not all reviewers concur, and this reviewer feels that *Rommel* fails for the same reasons as *Chickamauga*, only more so. Physical implementation and user friendliness are inadequate; these failures are of a sufficient magnitude to deter all but the most hardy from delving into the game.

This is a shame; it is apparent that much design time and effort went into *Rommel*. More was attempted than in most simulations. But the lack of response time by the artificial intelligence coupled with the graphics cannot save *Rommel* from itself.

Undocumented feature: *Rommel* has a feature not mentioned in the documentation, which may prove educational for the user. At any point one is in the option screen, pressing the "Shift-R" keys will allow the player to review the computer's move and modify it as one wishes (the programmer calls it the "ultimate cheat" key). Once this option is selected, it may not be turned off..



Name:	Bronze Dragon
System:	Apple II family
#Players:	1-5
Designers:	Dan Schnake Adam West
Publisher:	Commonwealth Software 821 S. State Avenue Indianapolis, IN 46227

BRONZE DRAGON

by Johnny Wilson

Sir Plene Bonum swaggered into the dark tavern. His practiced eye recognized eight potential enemies and his tactical intuition moved him to a position where his back was to no man. He hoped, anyway, that the giggling waitress who was gathering two tankards of ale for Captain Brawney of the local guard wouldn't try any stealthy maneuvers with daggers. He cast a wary eye toward the very old wizard who seemed to stagger, almost reel with fatigue down the stairway and hoped that the old geezer wouldn't zap him with a "Shatterglass" spell once he got up the nerve to approach him for information. A mesmerizing bosom hypnotized him for a moment as a voluptuous blonde waitress stepped up to the bar beside him. "Excuse me," he tried an uninspiring conversational gambit, "I'm new in town and I was wondering if you could tell me about the Parchment of Power."

The goddess in waitress garb turned sad eyes toward Sir Bonum and whispered, "Don't fight the zombies unless you must." The waitress of wonder glided away in order to serve the town blacksmith. The blacksmith had obviously overheard the knight errant's query because he offered the unsolicited information that those zombies were tough. Yet, the most interesting news came in a loud, authoritative voice from Captain Brawney, "The stupid paper won't even hold together. It ain't worth it, nohow!"

Such are the clues, red herrings and encounters that one is able to gain in the Dragon Village Pub, even before a party gets ready to embark upon an adventure in *Bronze Dragon* (BD). BD is a new release in the fantasy genre which looks visually like an offspring of the ubiquitous *Eamon* adventures (it's a text game); plays swiftly by means of a menu similar to the commands in *Phantasie* (no parser problems); entails character generation evolved from a *Wizardry* type system; and offers more plot lines than any other game in its genre. The raison d'etre for BD rests in the detailed background of the campaign (with 13 plots to choose from), the ability to personalize characters by means of acquiring artifacts which really affect events rather than simply adding to booty, and the awareness that each character's actions have significance (it's possible for one's alignment to change for better or worse). BD has enough opportunities for "hack and slay" gaming without being totally dependent upon such a strategy. Indeed, there are "good" monsters like lions and unicorns which are costly to attack.

The mechanics of BD are straightforward. It comes with two disks and the player must make a third using the BD utility (a character disk). After creating and saving a roster of characters, the player outfits each character and gathers a party. The potential races and character classes offer no real surprises. Humans, elves, dwarves and halflings make up the genetic pool for heroes and heroines. Knights, assassins, ninjas, elders and wizards make up the placement categories for those who want to graduate from the mundane to the heroic.

Once the party arrives at the site of the adventure, the game progresses by means of a numbered menu. These options are: 1) Rest, 2) Fight, 3) Search, 4) Look, 5) Diversion, 6) Advance, 7) Retreat, 8) Use Object, 9) Inventory or 0) Leave. The 'Search' command brings about a Search sub-menu which allows the character to search for objects, search creature, search for secret doors, or search for traps. The 'Diversion' option is unusual, but effective. This option gives everyone else in the party a +1 to hit on the next turn and allows assassins to assassinate, but draws the monster's attention to the character doing the diverting. 'Use Object' allows the character to attempt to unlock an item, use an item on a creature (how else would you eat or drink?), examine an object, use on one's possessions (connect two items, poison a blade, etc.), or use in the room (catch all command). The 'Inventory' command enables one to put the proper object in hand, determine character status, get rid of an object (erasing it from the module forever), give an object to another character or monster, or give money.

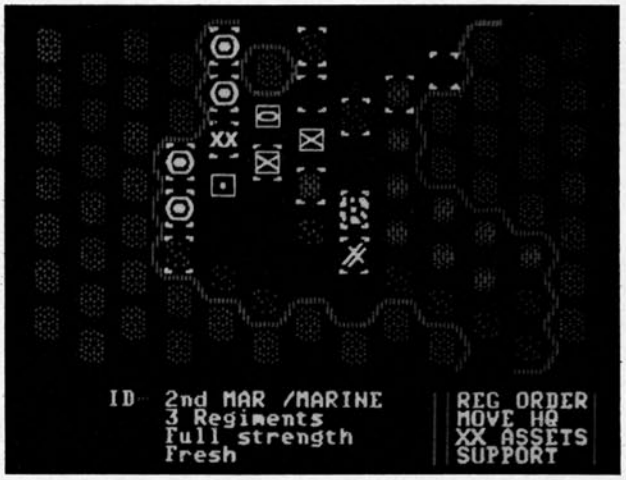
In addition to this menu and its sub-menus, each character class has its own special command menu. Pressing the space bar toggles these menus into place. Knights may choose the "Swordplay" option which adds +1 to the "To Hit" roll for every two skill levels of the knight and also maximizes sword

Continued on pg. 55

BATTLEFRONT

Continued from pg. 29

pabilities of your units and exploit their strengths. This one can be a bit tough, since the scenario descriptions tell you things like the identity of your units (mechanized infantry, assault guns, tank destroyers, etc.) but do not give you any specifics on the movement and combat capabilities of the individual battalions. Still, it is not a good idea to send your regiment of foot infantry in against a solid





line of armor battalions in the open! If all of these lessons sound pretty familiar, well they should. *Battlefront* does a pretty good job of rewarding proper strategies and blasting away poor ones. The problem to be overcome is the common feeling among gamers that "If I've got a unit, then by gosh, it's gonna do some fighting!" The sooner you learn to look beyond the simple symbols on the screen to take in the full picture of the battle with consideration to fatigue, supply, available air support, and your overall objectives; the sooner you will be a successful Corps commander.

The above mentioned were obviously recognized by the designers, and were obviously incorporated into the computerized opponent. The computer can play either side (or both) in any scenario, and provides a very credible opponent. Don't be ashamed to play your first few scenarios with a considerable handicap for your side.

Designing Your Own

Here we come to one of the key features of *Battlefront*, and also to one of the hallmarks of SSG's games. The game contains a "scenario creation" utility that allows you to create a scenario to cover virtually any ground combat that took place in World War II. Pretty big order? Well, yes, but when you can modify almost every parameter that defines a scenario, there is really very little limitation to what you can do. Undoubtedly, the biggest problem with designing particular scenarios will be that you will need accurate data for your scenarios.

This part of *Battlefront* is really more a "game design kit" than simply a way to modify scenarios. Let's start with terrain. You can specify the size of the map; from 13-by-7 to 39-by-28 hexes. The terrain in each hex can be defined individually. The number of possible terrain types is unlimited, because you define the effects of all terrain. There are fourteen different terrain icons, so this is the maximum number of different types of terrain you can put in a scenario, but each of those fourteen types can be anything you want. Take that light green icon. Label it "light woods" and give it minimal cover for direct fire and make the "movement points to enter" fairly low for both foot and motorized units. Or, call it "Amazonian jungle" and have it cost ten movement points for foot infantry and impassable to vehicles! Each terrain icon can be given a name and different movement parameters for foot vs. motorized units and different combat modifying parameters individually for small arms, heavier caliber direct fire weapons, and artillery.

The treatment of terrain should give you an idea about the open ended capabilities in designing your own scenarios. In addition to creating a custom map, you can generate the combat units in all shapes and sizes. Each battalion in the game can be given different movement and combat capabilities, range, weapons effectiveness, fatigue, and experience. Also, the headquarters units of the divisions can each be rated for leadership, administrative effectiveness, and supply capabilities. Finally, the scenario itself can be designed with a host of special features. You can designate the terrain objectives for each side, the length of the scenario, the victory points to be earned for each enemy strength point destroyed, and many other factors which can make each scenario unique.

One of the biggest headaches that people complained about with *Carriers At War* and *Europe Ablaze* was the amount of time that it took to ac-

tually input all the parameters needed to do your own scenarios. Although it may look like things will be just as time consuming with *Battlefront*, that is really not the case at all. The main reason is that even the very biggest scenario that you can design will have no more than sixty battalions on each side. This really made a big difference when I went to input my own scenarios; what had taken several evenings can now be done in a few hours. Actually, the toughest part of designing your own scenarios will be obtaining the required accurate background information on the battle that you plan to simulate. But then, that has been a major problem for all game designers since the hobby started. And, I am sure that we can look for help in this area to *Run 5*, the SSG magazine which has been published to support their games.

Final Thoughts

So far, I have not mentioned the execution of the combat routines in *Battlefront*. Unfortunately, it is a little tough to judge the appropriateness of the combat execution, since the documentation with the game tells us very little about how combat is actually resolved. For instance, the fatigue of the units in combat obviously affects their performance, but we can not tell whether the program might overstate or understate the importance of fatigue in the overall combat equation since we never see that equation. And judging the importance of any one component in combat by watching the outcome of combats in the game is pretty tough since each combat situation has so many independent variables which impact the outcome. In defense of the designers, I must say that the combat results do look pretty believable, and there is no doubting that Roger and Ian have tried to factor in as many parameters as possible. As one last example of the amount of detail in this program, it keeps track of the ownership of each hex on the board; whose units were the last to pass through it. Then, in the movement routines, the computer adjusts a unit's movement rate depending on whether it is traversing friendly or enemy hexes.

Battlefront is a very good game which does an excellent job of putting the player into an authentic combat role: that of a Corps commander. The four scenarios provided are a good showcase of the game's capabilities, but the real value of the game is in its ability to be tailored by the player. If you are willing to do a little research, *Battlefront* can be used to recreate just about any Corps level action from World War II. That's a lot of game to get for the money!



Circle Reader Service #53

PEEK (cont.)

Split-screen animated graphics give both an overhead view and a golfer's eye view of each hole. IBM ($49.95). Reader Service #9.

Ellicott Creek Software
30 Chestnut Ridge Lane
Tonawanda, NY 14150

THE ADVENTURE OF THE VATICAN CAMEOS: A text-based interactive novella based upon a story mentioned by Dr. J. Watson. The program utilizes a menu entry system to ease input. There program has a 13,000 word vocabulary and over 60 locations. YOU CAN WIN A $1000 IF YOU ARE THE FIRST PERSON TO SOLVE THE ADVENTURE (details will be made to registered owners). The game is NOT copy protected. Apple, IBM, C-64 ($32.95). Reader Service #10.

Hi Tech Expressions Inc.
2699 South Bayshore Dr.
Suite 1000A
Coconut Grove, FL 33133
1-800-848-9273

CARDWARE, HEARTWARE, PARTYWARE, JINGLEDISK: Four programs that allow you to design and print your own greeting cards. CardWare is a birthday greeting card and all occasion card maker. HeartWare allows you to make romantic love notes and greeting cards. PartyWare is a design kit for party paraphernalia such as party notes, hats, banners, placemats, games, etc. JingleDisk is a holiday card maker. All four products also allow you to make a disk greeting card, complete with music, that can be played on a friend's computer. PartyWare costs $14.95, the others are $9.95. Apple, C-64, Atari 8 bit, IBM. Reader Service #11.

Overt Strategic Simulations
P.O. Box 66424 Dept. 112
Los Angeles, CA 90066

WORDFUN!: Wordfun combines trivia with three word games to provide an educational game for any age group. The game includes thousands of words in phrases to be deciphered. IBM. Reader Service #12.

Performing Arts Software Inc.
320 N. Brazil Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46219

BASEBALL FANATIC: Here is a stat baseball with a few of new twists. Five play levels allow you to select the degree of "action". Selecting the 'Super Slugfest' option will result in a game with something like 30-40 hits. 'Slugfest'= 24-30 hits. 'Pitcher's Duel'= 8-15 hits.' Average Big League'= 16-23 hits. Pot Luck= the computer secretly selects a level. Unlike most stat games, in BF you play the game one pitch at a time. Mix up your pitches, fool the batter, outguess the pitcher. Finally, there is a Scoreboard Watcher feature that allows you

to replay games very rapidly. After selecting the teams and number of games to be played, just sit back and watch. IBM (Protected $39.95; Unprotected $49.95). Reader Service #13.

Simulations Canada
P.O. Box 452
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia
Canada B4V 2X6

OPERATION OVERLORD: A simulation of the 1944 summer battle for France. Computer can play either side. Players have the viewpoint of the Theatre Army commanders for the invasion, breakout, and defense of Fortress Europa. Under direct control of the players are such responsibilities as determining strategic goals, planning of operations, supply situations, operational orders to combat units, and the assignment of air power. The computer handles such considerations as individual tactical actions, movements, and engagements of land and air units. Apple, IBM ($60.00). Reader Service #15.

Strategic Simulations
1046 N. Rengstorff Ave.
Mountain View, CA 94043

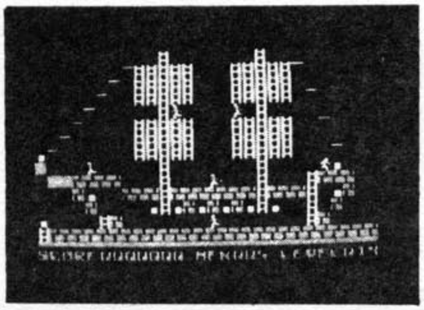
ROADWAR 2000: A 'strategic adventure game' reminiscent of the 'Road Warrior/Mad Max' movies. The game follows a futuristic scenario of a post-nuclear attack age where survival depends on a good set of wheels, and the ability to anticipate which human skills, tools and supplies are the most valuable in a world where civilization's normal infrastructure has broken down. As a gang leader in this world, you will be given the task of finding eight scientists who are crucial to the survival of the world. Apple, C-64 ($39.95). Reader Service #16.

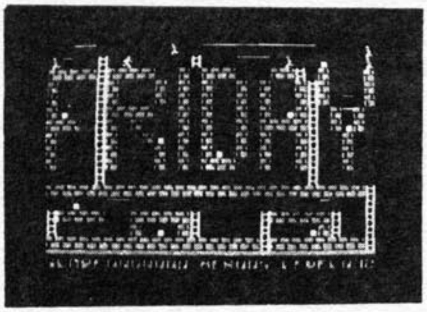
Tee-Kay Software
P.O. Box 23771
Columbus, OH 43223

GENRAL: A two player modem game that simulates a campaign in an imaginary 19th-century war (infantry, artillery, and cavalry). Players fill the role of division commanders. This real-time game requires two CP/M-80 or IBMpc computers communicating via modem or cable at 300 baud. Each player controls an army of 26 units. There can be action in several places at once, and the decision which to attend first can be critical. $50.00. Reader Service #14.

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5.4 - Operation Market Garden; Fog of War in Computer Games; Ultima II for Mac; The Amiga Computer; Computer Gaming in Japan; Phantasie tips; The Railroad Works; Six Gun Shootout; and more!

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#28 - The Dark Ages of Computer Game Design; Three article on computerized baseball; Autoduel; Alter Ego; Nam; The Current State of the Entertainment Industry; Halley Project Update; Amazon Tips; and more!

#29 - Battlegroup & Mech Brigade; Psi 5 Trading Co.; Battle of the Atlantic (SimCan); Universe II Playtester Notes; Island of Kesmai; Borrowed Time Tips; Golf Games; Countdown to Shutdown; Moebius; Norway 1985; Clash Of Wills; and more!

#30 - American Dream Review; Phantasie II; Industry Survey; Kobayashi Alternative Revisited; Orbiter and Flight Simulator for Mac; Silent Service for Atari; Championship Basketball; and more!

#31 - Wizard's Crown; Trinity Playing Tips; Operation Keystone; Habitat/Quantumlink; Baseball stat programs; Grand Slam; Race Car Simulator; Amiga graphics/music/video programs; APBA Baseball; Spin Out; World Karate; and more!

READER INPUT DEVICE

RID #32 (Use Card at pg. 5)

On this page a number of games are listed for evaluation. When evaluating a game consider such things as PRESENTATION (graphics, sound, packaging, documentation); GAME DESIGN (design, playability, interesting?); LIFE (does the game wear well?).

For each game you rate, place a 1 (terrible) through 9 (outstanding) next to the appropriate number. Leave blank any game which you have not played enough to have formed an opinion.

General Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. What is your income: a) Under $10,000; b) $10,000-$15,000; c) $15,000-$20,000; d) $20,000-$25,000; e) $25,000-$30,000; f) $30,000-$35,000; g) $35,000+
4. What percentage of your computer games do you buy via mailorder?
5. Do you own a modem?
6. Do ads in CGW influence your buying?
7. Do articles in CGW influence your buying?

Games

8. Chessmaster 2000 (SftToolW)
9. Kampfgruppe (SSI)
10. Silent Service (MicPr)
11. Mech Brigade (SSI)
12. M.U.L.E. (EA)
13. Battle of Antietam
14. Phantasie II (SSI)
15. Europe Ablaze (SSG)
16. Battlegroup (SSG)
17. War In Russia (SSI)
18. Star Fleet I (Cygnus)
19. Ogre (Origin)
20. 3-in-1 Football (Haffner)
21. Ultima IV (Origin)
22. Bard's Tale (EA)
23. Wizardry I (Sir Tech)
24. Wizard's Crown (SSI)
25. Ultima III (Origin)
26. Elite (Firebird)
27. Enchanter (Infcm)
28. Hardball (Accld)
29. Phantasie (SSI)
30. Spellbreaker (Infcm)
31. Trinity (Infcm)
32. Leather Goddesses (Infcm)
33. Alternate Reality (Datasoft)
34. Lords of Conquest (EA)
35. Battlefront (SSG)
36. A Mind Forever Voyaging
37. Marble Madness (EA)
38. Rommel (GDW)
39. Starflight (EA)
40. Roadwar 2000 (SSI)
41. Amnesia (EA)
42. Ace of Aces (Accolade)



Continued from pg. 49

damage. They may also choose to go into a 'Rage' which will allow them to attack at twice their normal speed, but will gradually reduce endurance to zero. Assassins may invoke their special menu in order to either 'Assassinate' (assuming that they have a dagger in hand and the area is either dark or the victim 'diverted') or "Sneak" about a room with a base 35% chance of not being detected.

Ninjas get a 'Martial Arts' option with its own sub-menu. After choosing this option, the ninja may either attack, strike or defend under a certain discipline. Attack will do 1-10 damage on a monster covered under that discipline and Strike will automatically cripple a monster covered under that discipline. For example, a ninja trained under the Bear Discipline would be able to cripple a monster that used an encircling (bear hug type) attack using Bear Strike. Defend increases one's armor ranking and also makes one invulnerable under the right discipline (Yeti Defense would make one invulnerable to Freeze spells). In addition, the ninja can 'Leap' within range without losing his combat turn or if necessary, 'Imitate Dead' (cures of poison, illusion and berserking).

Elders (the clerics of the game) and Wizards can toggle special sub-menus which list the spells they know by choosing the 'Sorcery' options. In addition, Wizards can 'Cast Energy' with the damage equal to 10 times the Wizard's skill level, but it reduces endurance to zero. Elders can 'Destroy' any 'undead' creature less powerful than the Elder. Further, the Elder has the very important option of 'Innate Heal' which will heal characters who have lost hit points beyond 50% of maximum.

For all of its similarity to other systems, BD is an imaginative game with its own character. The variety of attack options, artifacts, monster attacks, and plot twists makes it a distinctive, enjoyable and satisfying game. Nevertheless, many will not be interested because of the lack of even simple graphics in this age where numerous graphics adventures with relatively high sophistication exist. Here, one must make a choice between detailed data and an impressive array of options or sophisticated graphics and less options.

READER INPUT DEVICE

There were not many changes in position as a result of RID #30 (there is no RID #31). But there was one BIG occurance. Although the numbers are small, Chessmaster 2000 came in with an impressive 8.10 in the strategy catagory. It will be interesting to see how this program from Software Toolworks (distributed by EA) does on RID #32. On the adventure/action side Ultima IV continues to be the top rated game.

Strategy

Name	Mfg	Machine	Tms Rtd	Avg Rsp	Rating
Chessmaster 2000	EA	Many	1	20	8.10
Kampfgruppe	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	117	7.83
Silent Service	MicPr	C,At	4	108	7.78
Mech Brigade	SSI	C,Ap	4	69	7.55
M.U.L.E.	EA	C,At	14	81	7.48
Battle of Antietam	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	48	7.42
Europe Ablaze	SSG	C,Ap	4	32	7.35
Battlegroup	SSI	C,Ap	2	32	7.34
War in Russia	SSI	Ap,At	7	69	7.33
Star Fleet I	Cygnus	C,At,I	4	35	7.28
Decision in Desert	MicPr	C,At	2	45	7.33
Ancient Art of War	Brodr	I,M	5	30	7.32
Ogre	Origin	Ap	1	19	7.26
Crusade in Europe	MicPr	C,Ap,At	4	84	7.24
Fighter Command	SSI	C,Ap	8	43	7.24
Guadalcanal Camp	SSI	Ap	9	48	7.24
Seven Cities Gold	EA	All	7	118	7.20
Under Fire	AH	Ap	5	24	7.19
Carriers at War	SSG	C,Ap	4	81	7.17
Reach for Stars	SSG	C,Ap	4	50	7.12
Combat Leader	SSI	C,At	5	56	7.11
Computer Baseball	SSI	All	6	36	7.10
Micro Lg Baseball	MicLg	All	6	36	7.09
Heart of Africa	EA	C	3	27	7.09
Galactic Gladrs	SSI	Ap,I	3	32	7.07
Colonial Conquest	SSI	C,At	3	32	7.07
Oper Mkt Garden	SSI	C,Ap,At	4	58	7.06
Flight Sim II	SubLg	C,Ap,At	5	91	7.05
Carrier Force	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	108	7.04
Field of Fire	SSI	C,At	4	72	7.01
Breakthru Ardennes	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	44	6.95
3-in-1 Football	Hafner	C,Ap,I	1	19	6.95
Computer Ambush	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	46	6.93
U.S.A.A.F.	SSI	C,Ap,At	2	26	6.92
NAM	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	24	6.88
Cosmic Balance	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	84	6.83
Bomb Alley	SSI	Ap	4	32	6.82
Gato	SpHb	Ap,I,M	3	79	6.77
Gulf Strike	AH	At	4	33	6.75
Universe	Omtrn	Ap,I,M	3	46	6.73
Knights of Desert	SSI	All	5	63	6.61
Star League BB	Gmstr	C,Ap	2	62	6.60
Halley Project	Mndsc	C,Ap,At	2	24	6.50
Jet	SubLg	I	4	24	6.45
Chickamauga	GDW	At	2	26	6.60
Panzer Grenadier	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	23	6.35
Battalion Cmdr	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	33	6.34
Objective Kurks	SSI	C,Ap	2	44	6.28
Grey Seas/Skies	SimCa	C,Ap	4	20	6.24
NATO Commander	MicPr	C,Ap,At	3	38	5.88

Adventure/Action

Name	Mfg	Machine	Tms Rtd	Avg Rsp	Rating
Ultima IV	Orign	C,Ap,At	3	83	8.00
Bard's Tale	EA	C,Ap	3	58	7.85
Wizardry I	SirTc	Ap,I	16	73	7.76
Wizard's Crown	SSI	C,Ap	2	22	7.73
Ultima III	Orign	All	10	107	7.64
Elite	Fireb	C,Ap	3	35	7.54
Enchanter	Infcm	All	2	32	7.43
Hardball	Accld	C,Ap	3	26	7.43
Phantasie	SSI	C,Ap	4	75	7.41
Spellbreaker	Infcm	All	3	20	7.34
F-15 Strike Egl	MicPr	All	5	140	7.21
Knight of Diamonds	SirTc	Ap	11	53	7.19
Legacy of Llygamyn	SirTc	Ap	7	58	7.18
Phantasie II	SSI	C,Ap	2	25	7.18
Borrowed Time	Actvsn		1	27	7.15
Archon I	EA	All	10	98	7.14
One on One	EA	All	7	74	7.14
Questron	SSI	C,Ap,At	5	97	7.13
Auto Duel	Orign	Ap	2	29	7.12
Zork Series	Infcm	All	7	122	7.09
Lode Runner	EA	All	6	60	7.07
Sorcerer	Infcm	All	5	58	7.07
Ultima II	Orign	Ap	8	61	7.00
Ultima I	Orign	Ap	2	48	6.96
Deadline	Infcm	Ap,At,I	3	44	6.94
Rogue	Epyx	Many	1	26	6.92
Galactic Advntres	SSI	Ap,At	4	35	6.90
Hitchhiker's Guide	Infcm	All	4	108	6.86
Planetfall	Infcm	All	3	51	6.86
Racing Dest Set	EA	C	3	49	6.78
Moebius	Orign	Ap	2	21	6.71
Wishbringer	Infcm	All	2	42	6.68
Archon II	EA	C,Ap,At	4	76	6.64
Karateka	Brodr	C,Ap,At	3	79	6.64
Suspended	Infcm	At,Ap,I	6	61	6.63
Wrld Karate Chmps	Epyx		1	23	6.57
Mig Alley Ace	MicPr	C,At	3	40	6.55
Alter Ego	Actvsn	Many	1	25	6.52
Suspect	Infcm	Ap,At,I	2	48	6.39
Infidel	Infcm	All	3	52	6.38
Gemstone Warrior	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	76	6.36
Sky Fox	EA	Ap,I,Am	2	107	6.30
Six Gun Shootout	SSI	C,Ap,At	3	69	6.29
Mask of the Sun	Brodr	Ap,At	1	26	6.27
Hacker	Actvs	C,Ap,At	3	41	6.24
Seastalker	Infcm	All	1	46	6.17
Amazon	Telrm	C,Ap,I	1	23	6.13
Witness	Infcm	All	3	43	6.10
Murder on Zinder	EA	All	4	71	6.08
Solo Flight	MicPr	C,Ap,At	2	23	6.04

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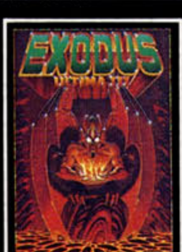


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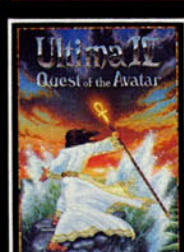
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